

## **Manual 21**

# Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Grant Program

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February 1, 2012

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# Section 1: Introduction

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## In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ ALEA program
- ✓ Where to get information
- ✓ Grant timeline

## Overview

The Legislature created the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account<sup>1</sup> (ALEA) in 1984 as a way to invest revenue raised from Washington's shorelines into projects meant to preserve and restore these valuable lands.

Aquatic lands mean all tidelands, shore lands, harbor areas, and the beds of navigable waters. These lands were dedicated at statehood for maritime trade, transportation, agriculture, and commerce, and are vital to the state's economy.

ALEA grants are funded entirely by money raised by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources from activities on those lands, such as leases to marinas on state-owned waterfront sites and the sale of harvest rights for geoduck clams.

ALEA grants may be used to buy, improve, or protect aquatic lands for public purposes. Grants also may be used to provide or improve public access to aquatic lands. The ALEA program is guided by the multiple goals of re-establishing naturally, self-sustaining ecological functions; providing people with access to the water; and increasing public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource and irreplaceable public heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> Enabling legislation is Revised Code of Washington 79.105.

## About the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

A portion of ALEA is administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which is a governor-appointed board composed of five citizens and the directors (or designees) of three state agencies – Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) supports the board. RCO is a small state agency that manages multiple grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, protect the best of the state's wildlife habitat and farmland, and help return salmon from near extinction.

This manual provides policies and guidelines for the ALEA grant program. It is created under the enabling legislation for ALEA and reflects the specific statutory requirements of Revised Code of Washington 79.105, Washington Administrative Code 286, and the policies of Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

## Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office  
Natural Resources Building  
1111 Washington Street  
Olympia, WA 98501  
E-mail: [info@rco.wa.gov](mailto:info@rco.wa.gov)

Telephone: (360) 902-3000  
FAX: (360) 902-3026  
TTY: (360) 902-1996  
Web site: [www.rco.wa.gov](http://www.rco.wa.gov)

Mailing Address  
PO Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

## Other Related Grant Manuals You Will Need

The manuals below provide additional information for grants and are available on the RCO Web site. Each can be made available in an alternative format.

- [\*Manual 3, Acquisition Projects\*](#)
- [\*Manual 4, Development Projects: Policies\*](#)
- *Manual 5, Restoration Projects*
- [\*Manual 7, Funded Projects\*](#)
- [\*Manual 8, Reimbursements\*](#)

## Grant Timeline

RCO offers grants every two years, in conjunction with the state budget. The grant process, from application to grant award, spans 14 months, and is outlined below. For precise dates, visit the RCO Web site.

### Even-numbered Years

#### Winter

**Workshops.** RCO conducts workshops in the winter or early spring of even years to provide information about the grant programs offered that year.

#### May

**Application Due.** Applications are due in early May of even-numbered years. Applicants fill out applications online through RCO's PRISM program on its Web site. Applications received after the deadline will be returned unless RCO's director has approved a late submission. Each application is assigned to an RCO outdoor grants manager.

#### May-June

**Project Reviews.** Within a few weeks of the application deadline, RCO will invite applicants to a project review meeting, where they present their projects to the ALEA advisory committee and RCO staff who review projects to ensure they are eligible, identify any issues of concern, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. Applicants then can make changes to improve the project.

#### July

**Board Submits Biennial Budget Request.** In July of even-numbered years, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board submits to the Governor a recommended funding amount for ALEA for the next biennium.

#### August

**Project Evaluation.** Applicants make an oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs in PowerPoint®, to the ALEA advisory committee, which scores each proposal against a set of criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. Staff tabulates the scores, creating a ranked list of projects for funding recommendations to the board.

## September-October

**Board Approves Project List.** In an open public meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers the recommendations of the advisory committee, written public comments submitted before the meeting, and public testimony at the meeting. The board then approves the list of projects for submittal to the Governor.

When considering lists of projects for recommendation, the board will use both anticipated funding and project evaluation results as a basis for determining the length of the lists to be submitted. The lists normally will exceed anticipated funding and will include alternate projects. Applicants are cautioned that the board's recommendation of project lists to the Governor is not the same as funding approval.

## October-December

**Governor Approves Projects.** The Governor's Office prepares the project list as part of the capital budget request to the Legislature.

## Odd-numbered Years

### January-May

**Legislature Approves Projects.** The Legislature approves a capital budget that generally includes funding for ALEA. The Legislature may remove projects from the list submitted by the Governor.

### May-July

**Proof of Matching Funds.** For projects that anticipate being funded, applicants must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline. The deadline is one month before the board meeting at which funding will be decided.

**Board Approves Funding.** After the Legislature and Governor approve the capital budget, the board approves the final grant awards, again in a public meeting. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to attend.

**Post Grant Award.** After grant awards, applicants have 60 days to submit post approval documents. RCO staff then writes grant contracts, called project agreements. Applicants must return the signed agreements within 60 days of receiving the contract. Once the agreement is signed, the applicant, now referred to as the project sponsor, may begin the project.

Agreements will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff. See [Manual 7, Funded Projects](#) for more information<sup>2</sup>.

If satisfactory assurances are not provided, the agreement period will lapse or the director will terminate the project. Additional information about the progress policy is found in [Manual 7, Funded Projects](#).

**Successful Applicants Workshop.** After the board approves funding, RCO hosts a workshop for successful grant applicants. This workshop covers basic responsibilities, billing procedures, and the terms of the grant contract.

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<sup>2</sup> Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

# Section 2: Policies

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## In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ Program goals and objectives
- ✓ Who is eligible to apply
- ✓ Eligible project types and locations
- ✓ Grant limits
- ✓ Match policies
- ✓ Other grant requirements

## ALEA Goals and Objectives

### Board Priorities

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages projects that involve both access to aquatic lands and the enhancement, improvement, and protection of aquatic lands.

### ALEA Goals

ALEA grants are awarded to projects that support one or more of the following goals:

- Improve the ecological function of aquatic resources through the restoration and enhancement of critical marine, estuarine, and freshwater aquatic land.
- Protect existing, high-quality aquatic land that will contribute to important ecological functions and processes.
- Provide new opportunities for people to get to the water and access aquatic resources for recreation and education.
- Renovate or improve existing public access to aquatic lands for recreation and education.

- Create small boat and pedestrian-oriented access to aquatic lands that is designed to protect the integrity of the environment.
- Increase public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource with irreplaceable public heritage.

## **Program Objectives**

To accomplish the above goals, the ALEA grant program seeks to fund projects that meet the following objectives:

- Preserve, enhance, or improve naturally self-sustaining aquatic and riparian areas that are priorities in the larger ecological landscape.
- Address deficiencies in public access opportunities or improve existing facilities.
- Provide immediately useable waterfront access.
- Integrate public access in a way that is compatible with the physical features of the site and minimizes impacts to the environment.
- Include interpretive or educational elements.

## **Eligible Applicants**

Divisions of local or state government, as well as Native American tribes, are eligible to apply only if legally authorized to acquire and develop public open space, habitat, or recreation lands.

Federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private entities are not eligible, but are encouraged to seek a partnership with an eligible entity.

## **Legal Opinion for First-Time Applicants**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires all organizations wishing to apply for a board grant for the first time to submit a legal opinion that the applicant is eligible to:

- Receive and expend public funds including funds from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board;
- Contract with the State of Washington and/or the United States of America;
- Meet any statutory definitions required for board grant programs;

- Acquire and manage interests in real property for conservation or outdoor recreation purposes;
- Develop and/or provide stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under board rules or policies;
- Undertake planning activities incidental thereto; and
- Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.

Note that the legal opinion is required only once to establish eligibility.

## Control and Tenures

An applicant must have sufficient control of the land or facility if it wishes to restore or develop the site to ensure that its proposal actually will be implemented and benefit the public. Details about establishing control are provided in [Manual 4, Development Projects: Policies](#) and *Manual 5, Restoration Projects*.

## Eligible Project Locations

ALEA projects must be associated with navigable waters of the state as defined by Washington Administrative Code 332-30-106, Revised Code of Washington 79.105, and Article 17 of the State Constitution.

All marine waters are, by definition, navigable, as are portions of rivers influenced by tides. Navigable rivers and lakes are those determined by the judiciary, those bounded by meander lines, or those that could have been used for commerce at the time of statehood. RCO staff can help you determine whether a freshwater body meets the navigability criteria.

Land adjacent to a navigable water body may be purchased with ALEA grants only if the land will contribute to the enhancement, improvement, or protection of aquatic lands or improve public access to aquatic lands.

Applicants proposing to conduct restoration or development projects on waters that are considered state-owned aquatic lands must consult with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources during the project planning phase to ensure authorization will be granted for your project.

## Geographic Distribution

The ALEA grant program strives to fund projects across the state of Washington. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages applications from eastern Washington. Known navigable freshwater bodies in eastern Washington include:

Calispell Creek	Liberty Lake	Rock Lake
Calispell Lake	Loon Lake	Snake River
Lake Chelan	Lost Lake	Spirit Lake
Cle Elum Lake	Medical Lake	Spokane River
Columbia River	Methow River (lower)	Sprague Lake
Curlew Lake	Moses Lake	Waitts Lake
Deer Lake	Newman Lake	Wenatchee Lake
Diamond Lake	Okanogan River	Wenatchee River
Eloika Lake	Osoyoos Lake	West Medical Lake
Fishtrap Lake	Pacific Lake	Yakima River (portions)
Kachess Lake	Palmer Lake	
Keechelus Lake	Pend Oreille River	

## Puget Sound Projects

The law<sup>3</sup> prevents the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board from funding any project in this grant program that is in conflict with the Puget Sound Partnership's *Action Agenda*. A project may be in conflict with the *Action Agenda* if it results in water quality degradation in Puget Sound or the loss of ecosystem processes, structure, or functions, and the impacts are not fully mitigated using state-approved protocols.

An applicant for a project in the Puget Sound area, which is defined as the geographic areas within Water Resource Inventory Areas 1 through 19, inclusive, must submit a letter along

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<sup>3</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

with the application certifying that the project is not in conflict with the *Action Agenda*. A sample letter is available in Appendix A.

The law<sup>4</sup> requires the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to give funding consideration to projects in this program that are referenced in the *Action Agenda*. Applicants for projects in the Puget Sound area may address a question in the evaluation criteria that addresses whether the project is referenced in the *Action Agenda*. There are no additional points for this question, but the evaluator has the ability within the current point system to give points based on the answer to this question. The *Action Agenda* can be found at [www.psp.wa.gov](http://www.psp.wa.gov).

The law<sup>5</sup> also requires the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to give funding preference to designated Puget Sound partners without giving less preferential treatment to entities that are not eligible to be Puget Sound partners<sup>6</sup>. The Puget Sound Partnership has not yet determined a method for designating Puget Sound partners. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will adopt policies for giving preferential treatment to partners after a method is determined for designating Puget Sound partners.

## Eligible Projects

### Acquisition

Grants may be used to buy aquatic lands or adjacent lands or purchase lesser interests such as conservation easements or access easements. Acquisition must result in an opportunity for reasonable public access. Technical guidelines for land acquisition may be found in [Manual 3, Acquisition Projects](#).

### Restoration (Improvement)

Restoration means to return damaged or altered aquatic lands or uplands to a condition that reasonably could be expected to improve substantially ecological conditions. Restoration projects may include planting native vegetation, altering or removing structures, and other activities that would make the site a self-sustaining, predominantly natural ecosystem that doesn't require continual intervention to function. Restoration projects must allow or provide public access to aquatic lands. Restoration projects with interpretive or educational elements are strongly encouraged. Additional requirements for restoration projects may be found in *Manual 5, Restoration Projects*.

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<sup>4</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

<sup>5</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79.105.610

<sup>6</sup> "Puget Sound partner" means an entity that has been recognized by the partnership, as provided in Revised Code of Washington 90.71.340, as having consistently achieved outstanding progress in implementing the 2020 *Action Agenda*. Revised Code of Washington 90.71.010.

## Development

Development means to improve, renovate, or provide new facilities that help people get to the waterfront for water-dependent activities. Examples include:

- Fishing piers and platforms
- Interpretive signs and kiosks
- Launch and moorage facilities for small boats<sup>7</sup>
- Non-motorized paths, trails, ramps, stairs
- Open-water swim areas
- Parking lots and entry roads
- Restrooms, benches, tables
- Viewpoints, platforms, blinds for observing wildlife
- Site restoration

Development projects including interpretive or educational features are strongly encouraged. Additional guidelines for development projects are found in [Manual 4, Development Projects: Policies](#).

## Phased Projects

RCO recommends that agencies consider the potential problems expensive projects usually create and discuss phasing them with RCO staff. Phased projects are subject to the following rules:

- Approval of any single phase is limited to that phase. No approval or endorsement is given or implied toward future phases.
- Each phase must stand on its merits as a viable or complete recreation experience.
- Each phase must be submitted as a separate application.

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<sup>7</sup> "Small boats" are non-motorized boats that may be launched by hand, or motorboats under 16 feet and with motors of less than 10 horsepower.

- Progress and sponsor performance on other grants may be considered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board when making decisions on project proposals.

If two or more projects are tied in rank through the evaluation process, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will give preference to the project that has had a previous phase funded by the board.

## **Combination Projects**

Combination projects involve two or more of the following project types: acquisition, development, or restoration. To help ensure that combination projects with an acquisition component are finished on time, at least one month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers approval of funding, applicants must secure the property by one of the following methods:

- Acquisition under the Waiver of Retroactivity policies and procedures in [Manual 3, Acquiring Land: Policies](#).
- Have property in escrow pending board grant approval.
- Obtain an option on the property that extends past the board's funding meeting. Execution of the option must occur within 90 days after this meeting.
- Provide draft copies of all leases or easements to RCO for review. Execution of the leases or easements must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.

## **Ineligible Project Elements**

The following project elements are ineligible for ALEA grants:

- Concessionaire buildings
- Fish or wildlife production facilities
- Indoor facilities such as swimming pools, community centers, museums, and interpretive or environmental visitor centers
- Offices, shops, residences, and meeting rooms
- Operating, overhead, or incidental costs
- Routine maintenance costs

- Legally mandated clean-up or costs of actions required as mitigation not associated with the approved project. Costs associated with mitigation directly related to the funded project are eligible, provided the cost does not exceed 25 percent of the total project cost.

### Barrier-Free Access

Sponsors must ensure that ALL structures and facilities funded by ALEA grants meet current barrier-free standards. For guidance, visit the RCO Web site and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's "Universal, Barrier-Free Access" policy in [Manual 4, Development Projects](#).

Plans, project applications, cost estimates, and construction drawings must reflect compliance with facility access and sign requirements.

### Grant Limits

Project Type	Maximum Grant
Acquisition	\$1 million
Restoration	\$500,000
Development:	\$500,000
Combination projects (acquisition with either development or restoration)	\$1 million, not more than \$500,000 may be for development or restoration costs.
Combination projects (development and restoration)	\$500,000

### Administration, Architecture, and Engineering

Information about eligibility and reimbursement ceilings for these elements is contained in [Manual 3, Acquisition Projects](#) (acquisition administration costs), [Manual 4, Development Projects: Policies](#), and [Manual 5, Restoration Projects](#) (architectural and engineering costs).

### Matching Resources

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires applicants to contribute to the project by providing matching resources. The board's intent is to foster a local commitment to the project and to make funds available to a greater number of projects<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

Applicants must provide a minimum 50 percent match for each project. The match may include, but is not limited to:

- Appropriations or cash
- Bonds
- Donations of cash, land, labor, equipment, and materials
- Staff labor, equipment, and materials (known as force account)
- Federal, state, local, and private grants
- Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants, if:
  - The grants are not from ALEA.
  - Only elements eligible in ALEA and the matching 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.

ALEA funds will not exceed 50 percent of a project's total cost.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will not reimburse more than the sponsor's actual expenditures.

For divisions of local governments, at least 10 percent of the total project cost must come from a non-state, non-federal contribution.

### **Not Allowed as Match**

- Assets of the grant applicant, such as real property or developments.
- Costs that are double counted (meaning a cost that an RCO grant has paid for cannot be used as a match on another RCO project).

### **Availability of Matching Share**

Applicants must have matching funds available for expenditure before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awards grants.

When one Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant is used to match another, the acceptance of the match will be conditioned on receiving both grants or the sponsor providing match from other resources. An applicant has six months from the time of the first

grant award to meet the match requirements of that grant. The project completion date will be the earlier of the two grants.

Applicants should plan ahead for projects whose match depends on passage of ballot measures. RCO may declare projects ineligible if there is no guarantee of matching funds or those projects may be passed over in favor of projects with match in place. Such decisions are based on RCO's confidence in the applicant's ability to have the match in place when required.

## Getting Paid

RCO grants are not paid up-front, with rare exceptions. A sponsor pays the cost of work completed, and then submits a bill to RCO for reimbursement. Sponsors will not be reimbursed for work begun or completed before the execution of a formal Recreation and Conservation Funding Board project agreement, except for land acquisitions completed under conditions of an RCO-approved waiver of retroactivity. Refer to [Manual 3, Acquisition Projects](#).

## Compliance and Conversions

Project sponsors must comply with the terms and conditions of the grant. After a project is complete (that is, after final reimbursement is made), RCO documents that were signed by the sponsor continue to govern the site, structures, or facilities for which funds have been granted. Unless otherwise allowed by policy, program, or agreement, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board expects the project to continue to function as originally funded in perpetuity – that is, forever. Changes may be made only with the approval of the board. If a compliance issue arises, the board works with sponsors to resolve the issue.

There are a number of ways a project can be out of compliance with the project agreement, the most serious of which is a conversion.

### Acquisitions

Land purchased with ALEA grants shall not be converted to uses other than those for which the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board originally approved the grants. The board only may approve a conversion when the replacement of land with land of equal fair market value at the time of conversion is assured. Aquatic lands also must be of as nearly equivalent or greater usefulness and location, if physically and/or biologically feasible.

### Restoration and Development Projects

A conversion may be declared when a project, due to a management activity, no longer meets or conforms to the intent of the project agreement.

Refer to [Manual 7, Funded Projects](#) for more information on compliance and conversion policy and procedures.

# Section 3: Project Evaluations

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## **In this section, you'll learn about:**

- ✓ The evaluation process
- ✓ The ALEA Advisory Committee
- ✓ Evaluation criteria

## **How Projects are Selected for Funding**

Each project is evaluated and scored to determine which will be submitted to the Governor's Office for funding consideration. Applicants are required to make an in-person presentation structured around a set of questions adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. The questions are created from statutory and other criteria developed through a public process. There are two types of questions: team scored and staff scored.

In the first section, the ALEA advisory committee uses subjective criteria to score each project. Scores are based on each applicant's response to evaluation questions, graphics presented during the evaluation meeting, and summary application material made available in advance of the presentation.

In the second section, RCO staff scores the projects using objective measures, such as matching share, population, and conformance to growth management planning.

Scores from sections one and two are combined for a project's total evaluation score.

## **ALEA Advisory Committee**

RCO manages the ALEA grant program with the assistance of a standing advisory committee. In recruiting members for the committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experience and knowledge related to aquatic lands, habitat, ecosystem functions, recreation, and public access issues.

Members are appointed by RCO's director, and may be reappointed for no more than 8 consecutive years. RCO's director may include ex-officio members to provide additional expertise. The advisory committee has representatives from state and local government, Native American tribes, and citizens. RCO strives to balance the advisory team with members who have a recreation background and those who have aquatic habitat background.

The ALEA advisory committee's role is to recommend policies and procedures to RCO for administering grant funds and to evaluate and score grant applications.

## General Evaluation Policies

While evaluation meetings are open to anyone, they are not public hearings. As such, only authorized applicant representatives may address the evaluation team. At these meetings, an RCO staff member serves as moderator. Scoring is confidential. Scoring instructions are contained in the individual evaluation instruments. Following the meeting, *all* scores are tabulated and compiled to establish a ranked list of projects. The ranked list is the basis for funding recommendations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

## Evaluation Criteria

### Projects Meeting the Single Purpose of Protection and Enhancement

#### Evaluation Question Summary

The ALEA program strives to fund projects focused on two main program purposes: improve or protect aquatic lands for public purposes (protection and enhancement), or provide and improve public access to aquatic lands<sup>9</sup>.

Most of the evaluation questions contain elements that are specific to either protection and enhancement projects or public access projects. Projects meeting the single program purpose of protecting or enhancing aquatic lands should address only those elements within questions 1-3 under the heading Protection and Enhancement Projects. Depending on project type (acquisition or restoration) applicants will answer either 4a (acquisition projects) or 4b (restoration projects). Projects combining acquisition and restoration will answer either 4a or 4b based on which elements represent the majority in the total project cost.

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<sup>9</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(1)

Scored By	#	Question	Evaluators Score	Multiplier	Maximum Points
Advisory Committee	1	Fit with ALEA Program Goals	0-5	3	15
Advisory Committee	2	Project Need	0-5	4	20
Advisory Committee	3	Site Suitability	0-5	2	10
Advisory Committee	4a	Urgency and Viability <i>(acquisition projects only)</i>	0-5	2	10
<b>OR</b>					
Advisory Committee	4b	Project Design and Viability <i>(restoration projects only)</i>	0-5	2	10
Advisory Committee	5	Community Involvement and Support	0-5	2	10
RCO Staff	6	Growth Management Act Preference	0	1	0
RCO Staff	7	Proximity to People	0-1	1	1
<b>Total Possible Points</b>					<b>66</b>

## Projects Meeting the Single Purpose of Public Access

### Evaluation Question Summary

The ALEA program strives to fund projects focused on two main program purposes: improve or protect aquatic lands for public purposes (protection and enhancement), or provide and improve public access to aquatic lands<sup>10</sup>.

Most of the evaluation questions contain elements that are specific to either protection and enhancement projects or public access projects. Projects meeting the single program purpose of providing or improving public access to aquatic lands should address only those elements within questions 1-3 under the heading Public Access Projects. Depending on project type (acquisition or development) applicants will answer either 4a (acquisition projects) or 4b (development projects). Projects combining acquisition and development will answer either 4a or 4b based on which elements represent the majority in the total project cost.

<sup>10</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(1)

Scored By	#	Question	Evaluators Score	Multiplier	Maximum Points
Advisory Committee	1	Fit with ALEA Program Goals	0-5	3	15
Advisory Committee	2	Project Need	0-5	4	20
Advisory Committee	3	Site Suitability	0-5	2	10
Advisory Committee	4a	Urgency and Viability <i>(acquisition projects only)</i>	0-5	2	10
<b>OR</b>					
Advisory Committee	4b	Project Design and Viability <i>(development projects only)</i>	0-5	2	10
Advisory Committee	5	Community Involvement and Support	0-5	2	10
RCO Staff	6	Growth Management Act Preference	0	1	0
RCO Staff	7	Proximity to People	0-1	1	1
<b>Total Possible Points</b>				<b>66</b>	

## Projects Meeting Both Program Purposes: Protection and Enhancement AND Public Access Projects

### Evaluation Question Summary

The ALEA program strives to fund projects focused on two main program purposes: improve or protect aquatic lands for public purposes (protection and enhancement), or provide and improve public access to aquatic lands.<sup>11</sup>

Projects that meet both purposes (protecting or enhancing aquatic lands and providing or improving public access) may receive up to five additional points by receiving a higher weighted score under criterion 1. Applicants address all elements under all questions except for criterion 4. Applicants answer criterion 4a for projects that primarily are for acquisition. Applicants answer criterion 4b for projects that primarily are for enhancement and public access development and enhancing or restoring habitat. Projects combining acquisition and development and restoration will answer either 4a or 4b based on which elements represent the majority in the total project cost.

<sup>11</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(1)

Scored By	#	Question	Elements	Score	Multiplier	Maximum Points	Total Points
Advisory Committee	1	Fit with ALEA Program Goals	Protection and Enhancement Elements	0-5	2	10	20
			Public Access Elements	0-5	2	10	
Advisory Committee	2	Project Need	Protection and Enhancement Elements	0-5	2	10	20
			Public Access Elements	0-5	2	10	
Advisory Committee	3	Site Suitability	Protection and Enhancement Elements	0-5	1	5	10
			Public Access Elements	0-5	1	5	
Advisory Committee	4a	Urgency and Viability (acquisition projects only)	All Elements	0-5	2	10	10
<b>OR</b>							
Advisory Committee	4b	Project Design and Viability (restoration and development projects only)	Protection and Enhancement Elements	0-5	1	5	10
			Public Access Elements	0-5	1	5	
Advisory Committee	5	Community Involvement and Support	All Elements	0-5	2	10	10
RCO Staff	6	Growth Management Act Preference	All Elements	0	1	0	0
RCO Staff	7	Proximity to People	All Elements	0-1	1	1	1
<b>Total Possible Points</b>						<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>

## Evaluation Questions

- 1. Fit with ALEA Program Goals.** How well does this project fit the ALEA program goals to enhance, improve, or protect aquatic lands and provide public access to aquatic lands?<sup>12</sup>

Additional guidance on ALEA program goals and objectives are in Section 1 of this manual.

### A. Protection and Enhancement Projects

- How will this project:
  - Protect existing, high value aquatic land that will contribute to important ecological functions and processes?
  - Improve the ecological function of aquatic resources through the restoration and enhancement of critical marine, estuarine, and freshwater aquatic land?
  - Preserve or establish naturally, self-sustaining aquatic and riparian areas that are a high priority in the larger ecological landscape?
- What are the environmental benefits of the proposed project?<sup>13</sup>

### B. Public Access Projects

- How will this project:
  - Provide new opportunities for people to get to the water and access aquatic resources for recreational and educational purposes?
  - Renovate or improve existing public access to aquatic lands for recreational and educational use?
  - Create non-motorized boating or small boat and pedestrian-oriented access to aquatic lands that is designed to protect the integrity of the environment?
  - Integrate public access in a way that is compatible with the physical features of the site?

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<sup>12</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

<sup>13</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(2)

- Increase public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource with irreplaceable public heritage?
  - What are the environmental benefits of the proposed project?<sup>14</sup>
  - ▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for protection and enhancement only or public access only projects. The total score is multiplied by 3 for a total of 15 possible points. If the project includes both protection and enhancement and public access elements, evaluators score 0-5 for protection and enhancement questions and 0-5 for public access questions. The total score is multiplied by 2 for a total of 20 possible points.
- 2. Project Need.** What is the need for this project?

**A. Protection and Enhancement Projects**

- How does the project address priorities contained in an approved watershed plan, shoreline master plan, species recovery plan, or other state or local plan? Is the project mentioned specifically in the plan?
- How does the project enhance or complement other nearby protection and enhancement efforts in the watershed or on the shoreline?
- How is the need for this project supported in studies, surveys, and other analyses?
- Will the project benefit sensitive, threatened, or endangered species or critical plant and animal communities? If so, how?
- For Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19, how is the project referenced in the *Action Agenda* developed by the Puget Sound Partnership? The *Action Agenda* can be found at [www.psp.wa.gov](http://www.psp.wa.gov). Evaluators should ignore this question for projects outside Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19.

**B. Public Access Projects**

- Does the project address the priorities contained in an approved public access recreational plan or other state or local plan? Is it mentioned specifically in the plan?
- How is the need for this project supported in studies, surveys, and other analysis?

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<sup>14</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(2)

- How does this project provide opportunities for unserved or underserved recreational need, especially for water dependent uses?
- Does the project include interpretive or educational elements?
- For Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19, how is the project referenced in the Action Agenda developed by the Puget Sound Partnership? The Action Agenda can be found at [www.psp.wa.gov](http://www.psp.wa.gov). Evaluators should ignore this question for projects outside Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19.

▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for protection and enhancement only or public access only projects. The total score is multiplied by 4 for a total of 20 possible points. If the project includes both protection and enhancement and public access elements, evaluators score 0-5 for protection and enhancement questions and 0-5 for public access questions. The total score is multiplied by 2 for a total of 20 possible points.

**3. Site Suitability.** Is the site well suited for the intended uses?

**A. Protection and Enhancement Projects**

- Are the location and natural features of the site, for example the size, topography, soil conditions, and natural amenities, well suited for the intended uses?
- What are the historic and current human uses of the site?
- What are the historic and current ecological functions of the site?
- What steps will be taken to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to the site once it has been acquired, restored, enhanced, or developed? Possible impacts to address could include flooding, extreme tides, storms, sources of contamination, and long-term impacts due to development and climate change.
- Are there similar sites available near the area that provide a similar opportunity or is this property a one-of-a-kind opportunity to address an ecological need?
- Is the site size and configuration sufficient to meet the specified ecological goals on its own? Possible things to address include water quantity and flow patterns at the site, patch size and shape, edge and interior habitat, and habitat corridors.

- Is the site contiguous with other conservation areas or actions that address similar ecological functions and processes?

#### **B. Public Access Projects**

- Are the location and natural features of the site, for example the size, topography, soil conditions, and natural amenities, well suited for the intended uses?
  - What are the historic and current human uses of the site?
  - What are the historic and current ecological functions of the site?
  - What steps will be taken to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to the site once it has been acquired, or developed? Possible impacts to address could include flooding, extreme tides, storms, sources of contamination, and long-term impacts due to development and climate change.
  - Are there similar sites available near the area that provide similar access opportunities or is this property a unique opportunity to address a specific access need?
  - Can the site support facilities necessary for the intended type and quantity of use?
  - Is the site of adequate size to accommodate the facilities proposed?
- ▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for protection and enhancement only or public access only projects. The total score is multiplied by 2 for a total of 10 possible points. If the project includes both protection and enhancement and public access elements, evaluators score 0-5 for protection and enhancement questions and 0-5 for public access questions for a total of 10 possible points. There is no multiplier.

#### **4A. Urgency and Viability.** Only acquisition projects answer this question.

- Why purchase this particular property at this time? How viable are the anticipated future uses and benefits of the site?
- If ALEA funding is not made available, will high priority aquatic land habitat and/or public access be lost?
- What are the alternatives to acquiring the property?
- Is there an immediate threat or will the property be available for acquisition or enhancement at a later time?

- What is the likelihood that the property will be converted to a non-recreational use or that aquatic habitat resources will be impacted or lost if the property is not acquired now?
- Is there a threat to the public availability of the resources at the site?
- 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, when will for the improvements be made?
- What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future factors such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning that may impact the viability of the site?
- Describe land management practices in the area that may affect the viability of the site?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available for that maintenance?

▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for all acquisition or combination projects. The total score for all project types is multiplied by 2 for a total of 10 possible points.

**4B. Project Design and Viability.** Only restoration and enhancement projects, public access development projects, or combination (restoration and enhancement, and public access development) projects answer this question.

#### **I. Restoration and Enhancement Projects**

- How does the project address the stated restoration or enhancement need? Is the project well designed? Will the project lead to sustainable ecological functions and processes over time?
- How will the site be treated to re-establish the desired ecological processes and functions?
- What habitat functions will be enhanced or restored?
- How well does the proposed restoration or enhancement design or actions address desired long-term results?
- What is the certainty that the restoration or enhancement actions will be successful?
- Will the project require decreasing involvement over time?

- What is the habitat quality and land management practices in the area that may affect the viability of the site?
- What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future concerns such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning?
- How will the site be managed over time to maintain the desired ecological processes and functions?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available to do it?

## II. Public Access Projects

- How well does the project address the stated public access need? Is the project well designed? Will the project result in public access to aquatic lands that protect the integrity of the environment?

Some design elements that may be considered include accuracy of cost estimate, aesthetics, maintenance requirements, materials, phasing, risk management, recreational experience, spatial relationships, universal accessibility, and user friendly design.

- Does the project demonstrate good design criteria; does it make the best use of the site?
- Does the design provide equal access for all people, including those with disabilities?
- Does the proposed development protect the natural resources on site? For example, does the project include low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?
- Is the site design visually integrated into the landscape features?
- How will the site be designed to handle projected use?
- What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future concerns such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning?
- How likely are the proposed public use facilities given the required regulatory and proprietary approvals, funding, etc?

- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available to do it?
  - What outdoor environmental education elements are included in the project?
    - How much effort is dedicated to interpreting the value of the aquatic lands?
    - Are the themes or concepts appropriate to the specific site?
    - Does the content in the display match the intended audience?
    - Is the interpretive display accessible to wide variety of users?
- ▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for protection and enhancement only or public access only projects. The total score is multiplied by 2 for a total of 10 possible points. If the project includes both protection and enhancement and public access elements, evaluators score 0-5 for protection and enhancement questions and 0-5 for public access questions for a total of 10 possible points. There is no multiplier.

**5. Community Involvement and Support.** All projects:

- 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, notices 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; letters to the editor; or private contributions to the project.

- ▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for all projects. The score is multiplied by 2 for a total of 10 possible points.

### RCO Staff Scores

- 6. Growth Management Act (GMA) Preference.** Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?<sup>15</sup> (GMA-preference required.)

State law requires that:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant<sup>16</sup> has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040.
- B. When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants<sup>17</sup> that have adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant<sup>18</sup> is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it:
  - o Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law;
  - o Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan; or
  - o Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than six months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- C. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection (2) over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

This question is determined by RCO staff based on information obtained from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Services. To qualify for a grant, the Growth Management Act comprehensive plan and development regulations must be completed by RCO's application deadline.

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<sup>15</sup> Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

<sup>16</sup> County, city, town, and special district applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agencies, tribes, nonprofits, or lead entities.

<sup>17</sup> Same as footnote 16

<sup>18</sup> Same as footnote 16.

▲ Staff scores 0 to -1 point. RCO staff subtracts a maximum of 1 point; there is no multiplier.

-1 point      The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250)

0 points      The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

0 points      The applicant is a state, tribal, or federal agency

**7. Proximity to People.** RCO is required by law to give funding preference to projects located in populated areas. Populated areas are defined as a town or city with a population of 5,000 or more, or a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.<sup>19</sup>

- Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

▲ RCO staff scores 0-1 point. There is no multiplier.

0 points      No

1 point      Yes

**8. Puget Sound Partners. The following is a placeholder pending action by the Puget Sound Partnership. As a placeholder, it will not be scored during the 2012 grants cycle.**

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 by 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.

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<sup>19</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250.

## Appendix A:

### Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda Self-Certification Form

This letter certifies that the [Enter applicant name] is not in conflict with the *Action Agenda* developed by the Puget Sound Partnership under Revised Code of Washington 90.71.310.

I understand that a project designed to address the restoration of Puget Sound cannot be funded if it is in conflict with the *Action Agenda*.\*

The following is a brief description of the [Enter project name and RCO project number]:

[Add project description]

- I certify that this project is within the Puget Sound basin (defined for these purposes as within Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19).
- I further certify that this project is not in conflict with the *Action Agenda* developed by the Puget Sound Partnership because (please check all that apply):
  - When completed, this project will not result in water quality degradation in Puget Sound and meets or exceeds all permitting requirements.
  - When completed, this project will not result in loss of ecosystem processes, structure, or functions, and meets or exceeds all permitting requirements.

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\*Relevant program legislation will be referenced: Revised Code of Washington 77.85.130; 79.105.150 or 79A.15.040