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For release: Dec. 7, 2009

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## **State Board Acknowledges Spokane County and Northport's Top Scores**

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will recognize Spokane County and the city of Northport this week for outstanding projects to conserve wildlife habitat and provide facilities for boaters.

Spokane County took the top score in a statewide competition for grant funding in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Urban Wildlife Habitat category, a grant program designed to conserve habitat for wildlife near cities.

The town of Northport took the top score in the Boating Facilities Program, a statewide grant program designed to provide places for boaters to recreate.

"These projects scored well because they are meeting needs within their communities and providing important places for both wildlife and people," said Kaleen Cottingham, director of the Recreation and Conservation Office, which administers the grant programs. "These two grant programs are very competitive and only the best projects score well enough to be funded."

Spokane County was awarded a \$1.6 million grant to conserve 370 acres on Antoine Peak. The land offers a broad range of year-round outdoor activities such as hiking, wildlife watching, riding horses, mountain biking, picnicking, trail running and cross country skiing. It is part of an important wildlife corridor that stretches north to Mount Spokane State Park and into the Selkirk Mountains. It also is home to elk, moose, black bear, deer and eight species in decline. Many streams cross the property providing critical water and recharging the source of drinking water for more than 500,000 people.



This is the second year Spokane County has taken the top spot for a project on Antoine Peak. In 2006, Spokane County was awarded a \$1.4 million grant in the same grant program to purchase 385 acres.

The county competed against 15 other local agencies for the grant from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The Legislature created the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program in 1990 to buy land before it was developed and to create outdoor recreation areas for the state's growing population.

The town of Northport received a \$293,800 grant to improve its boat launch. Town officials plan to widen and lengthen the launch, add a new gangway and extend the dock to provide easier access for boaters. The extended dock will move swimmers and anglers away from the boat launch area to improve safety. The launch's picnic facilities and restrooms also will be upgraded.

The town competed against 12 other local governments for the grant from the Boating Facilities Program. This program was created by voters in 1964 when they approved Initiative 215. They voted to tax themselves to support the development of facilities to meet the needs of boaters.

Jeff Parsons, a member of the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, will present checks representing the funding available for these projects at the following times:

- **Spokane County Commission Meeting**

2 p.m., Dec. 8

Spokane County Courthouse

1116 W. Broadway

Spokane

- **Northport Town Council Meeting**

7 p.m., Dec. 9

315 Summit Ave.

Northport

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