

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM****Meeting Date:** January 22, 2019**Title:** Update on the Recreational Assets of Statewide Significance Study**Prepared By:** Adam Cole, Natural Resource Policy Specialist**Summary**

This memo summarizes staff's work to date on an RCO study of recreational assets of statewide significance. The study is mandated by a budget proviso in the 2018 capital budget, which directs RCO to conduct a study that identifies recreational assets of statewide significance, where gaps in recreational assets exist, and investment strategies and options for addressing those gaps. The study must address existing and projected future needs of the people of Washington state. To date, staff have hired two GIS contractors, established and met with a statewide Advisory Committee, and conducted outreach to scope out the study and identify which assets to include. The study is due to the legislature by June 30, 2019.

**Board Action Requested**

This item will be a:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Direction
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Briefing

**Summary**

This memo summarizes staff's work to date on an RCO study of recreational assets of statewide significance. The study is mandated by a budget proviso passed as part of the 2018 capital budget. The proviso states RCO must conduct a study that identifies recreational assets of statewide significance, where gaps in recreational assets exist, and investment strategies and options for addressing those gaps. The study must address existing and projected future needs of the people of Washington State, and help to fulfill the goals of the [2018 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan 2018-2022](#).

The proviso included \$100,000 from the state building construction account to complete the study. To date, staff have:

1. Hired two GIS contractors to conduct spatial analyses and create map applications;
2. Established and met with the statewide Recreational Assets of Statewide Significance Advisory Committee to help scope out the study and make recommendations; and
3. Conducted outreach to identify which assets to include.

The study is due to the Legislature by June 30, 2019.

The Recreational Assets of Statewide Significance Advisory Committee (RASS) consists of the following representatives:

- Nancy Lilquist, Ellensburg City Council Member
- David Schaub, Spokane County Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- Jon Snyder, Recreation Policy Advisory, Governor's Office
- Peter Mayer, Deputy Executive Director, Metro Tacoma Parks
- Larry Otos, Principal, The Otos Group
- Andrea Imler, Advocacy Director, Washington Trails Association
- Doug Levy, Principal, Outcomes By Levy
- David Patton, Northwest Director, Trust of Public Land
- Mike Racine, Washington SCUBA Alliance
- Peter Schrappen, Director of Government Affairs, Northwest Maritime Trade Association
- Owen Rowe, Government and Legislative Affairs Director, State Parks
- Tim Stapleton, Recreation Program Manager, Department of Natural Resources
- Cynthia Wilkerson, Land Division Manager, Department of Fish and Wildlife

For verbatim language and citation of the study proviso see Attachment A.

## Scope of Study

Based on staff's outreach with study stakeholders and meetings with the Advisory Committee, the current scope of the study is two-fold. We shall evaluate the following two levels of recreational assets of statewide significance:

1. Foundational Assets. These are assets with amenities that support the most popular recreational activities in the state.
2. Exceptional Assets. These are assets that represent the most popular, destination-oriented, and iconic places in the state to recreate.

These two groups of assets are not mutually exclusive.

The focus of the study will be on publicly-owned outdoor facilities. However, private recreation facilities such as sport stadiums, marinas, and golf courses shall be included provided they are primarily open and available to the general public<sup>1</sup> and not for the purpose of professional or semi-pro sports.

---

<sup>1</sup> Anyone may use them for no cost or an affordable price.

## Foundational Recreation Assets

Foundational recreation assets are those that support the most popular activities as determined by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan 2018-2022. These assets are considered important to have in or nearby every community in the state because they are important for every locale in the state. These assets strengthen the livability, vitality, and the economic and public health of a community. These facilities likely also provide needed ecosystem services.

The most popular activities and the related foundational assets are:

<b>Most Popular Activities</b> <small>(At a minimum, roughly one third of residents participate in these)</small>	<b>Foundational Assets</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking</li> <li>• Hiking</li> <li>• Bicycling</li> </ul>	Trails, Urban Bicycle and Pedestrian Networks <sup>2</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leisure Activities (picnicking, socializing, events)</li> </ul>	Neighborhood/Community Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature Activities</li> <li>• Sightseeing (including by car)</li> </ul>	Natural Areas (Geographies that provide multiple benefits to include recreation, conservation, education, and ecosystem services)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Paddling (floating)</li> </ul>	Water Access Sites/Water Bodies, Marine Parks, Marine Trails,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing Sports</li> </ul>	Local Parks and Regional Athletic Complexes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming (pool)</li> </ul>	Outdoor and Indoor Pools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motor boating/Sailing</li> </ul>	Launch Sites, Moorages, Marinas, Water Bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camping</li> </ul>	Campgrounds (developed or undeveloped)

---

<sup>2</sup> A community with an approved and funded bike or pedestrian master plan.

• Snow and Ice Activities	Trails, Winter Recreation Facilities
---------------------------	--------------------------------------

This study shall:

1. Identify the current mapped inventory of these foundational assets (to include those where construction is imminent).
2. Establish standards for the public opportunity for each asset (acres/person within a geography, means of access and distance of travel, etc.) and use these as metrics to establish gaps.
3. Identify how gaps may exist into the future based on demographic changes.
4. Display data in a map application.

## ***Exceptional Recreation Assets***

Exceptional recreation assets of state-wide significance are specific places that provide regional or “destination” recreational experiences. Exceptional recreational assets will be identified through outreach to stakeholder groups and should include two or more of the following criteria:

1. A “destination” type facility that is well-known, a major gathering place, and important to an organized statewide or regional user group(s), and these groups provide advocacy and resources (volunteers, donations) to support the facility.
2. A centerpiece outdoor recreation attraction that draws significant number of visitors, particularly from other areas, other states, and even other countries.
3. Is highly important to a specific user group that has disproportionately limited opportunities, or those under threat of closer.
4. Enhances Washington’s economic standing with particular user groups; supports the tourism sector and other businesses.
5. Popular venues that host large events or competitions.
6. Sites that are connected to larger recreational goals (example: national trail system or scenic roadway system, National Wildlife Refuges)
7. Large or otherwise significant sites that combine recreation and high conservation and aesthetic/scenic value, and significant ecosystem services contributions.

This study shall:

1. Identify these exceptional assets through interviews and tours with state-wide user and advocacy groups, community groups, land managers and government officials, elected officials, retailers, trade associations, focus groups, and individuals.
2. Establish standards for the public opportunity for each asset (acres/person within a geography, means of access and distance of travel, etc.) and use these as metrics to establish the gaps for each asset.

3. Identify how gaps may exist into the future based on demographic changes.
4. Display data in a map application, or story map format.

## ***Supporting the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan***

Through staff's analysis of the 2018 [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan 2018-2022](#) (Plan), the study will help fulfill the goals of the following sections of the plan:

1. Sustain and Grow the Legacy of Parks, Trails, and Conservation Lands
  - a. Renovate facilities to meet today's recreation needs.
  - b. Pursue regional solutions to recreation and conservation.
  - c. Maintain residents' level of satisfaction in recreation.
2. Position Recreation and Conservation as a Vital Public Service
  - a. Promote the outdoor recreation economy and other benefits.
3. Improve Equity
  - a. Locate and build recreation facilities for underserved populations<sup>3</sup>.
  - b. Connect more people to popular activities.
  - c. Provide experiences where people go the most.
  - d. Enhance community health and safety.
4. Get Youth Outside
  - a. Provide a variety of activities for youth.
  - b. Build and renovate athletic facilities.
5. Plan for Culturally Relevant Parks and Trails to Meet Changing Demographics
  - a. Create new and diverse opportunities.
  - b. Accommodate the Active Senior Population

### **Study Format**

The assets featured in the study shall be displayed on one or more map applications which show the service area of the asset (still to be determined) and associated service gaps. The study will identify important assets across a multitude of jurisdictions without being limited to a single agency's or organization's priorities, needs, mission, authority, or geography. The study will include a written report with recommendations and projected future needs. In addition, the mapped inventory shall include a layer of all recreational assets categorized more generally by

---

<sup>3</sup> ...often referred to as "at-risk populations"

their “classes” or “level” of development and intended public utility. This will provide a broader and more generalized picture of where more intensive recreational development exists vs areas where there is less recreational development (and more conservation lands).

## **Next Steps**

Based on the information generated from a GIS analyses of outdoor statewide recreational assets, and feedback and input from the Advisory Committee and those included in our outreach, the study will identify recommendations and strategies to fill the gaps in foundational and exceptional assets now and into the future.

The study will also highlight those significant assets that are threatened due to loss of funding, development pressure, or other means.

The study may also make recommendations on addressing important immerging issues such as the need to fund deferred maintenance on assets of statewide significance.

## Attachment A

### [2018 Session Laws of the State of Washington Volume 3](#)

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3051.** A new section is added to 2018 c 2 (uncodified) to read as follows:

**FOR THE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE**

Recreational Assets of Statewide Significance (92000446)

The appropriation in this section is subject to the following conditions and limitations: The appropriation is provided solely to conduct the study required in section 7012 of this act.

Appropriation:

State Building Construction Account—State	\$100,000
Prior Biennia (Expenditures)	\$0
Future Biennia (Projected Costs)	\$0
TOTAL	\$100,000

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7012.** A new section is added to 2018 c 2 (uncodified) to read as follows:

(1) The legislature recognizes that outdoor recreation in Washington provides multiple benefits including significant business and retail tax revenue, business and job creation, improved physical and mental health, higher quality of-life that attracts and retains businesses and workers from beyond the recreation sector, and conservation and education values. To fulfill the goals of the 2018 recreation and conservation plan for Washington State, the recreation and conservation office must conduct a study that identifies recreational assets of statewide significance, where gaps in recreational assets exist, and investment strategies and options for addressing those gaps. The study must address existing and projected future needs of the people of Washington State.

(2) The office must submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature by June 30, 2019.