

Skagit Valley Herald

Most Local Parks and Rec Projects Make State Cut

By Ralph Schwartz
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Despite a tight budget, the state Legislature funded most of the Skagit and Island County recreation and conservation projects that were in line for money from the state Wildlife and Recreation Program.

Funds totaling \$6.75 million will go to proposals ranging from an expansion of Deception Pass State Park to a children's splash park in Mount Vernon.

The following grants were awarded to projects in Skagit County:

- \$2.5 million for the acquisition of 22 acres on Kiket Island as an area to view marine ecosystems;
- \$2 million to add 75 acres to Deception Pass State Park;
- \$325,000 for improvements to Samish Overlook;
- \$322,000 for a splash park and boardwalk at Kiwanis Park;
- \$319,455 for preservation of farmland on Fir Island;
- \$246,460 for habitat improvements at Skagit Bay;
- \$193,000 for a trail on a new promenade in downtown Mount Vernon; and
- \$115,000 for renovation of a softball field at Skagit Playfields.

Two Island County projects were funded:

- \$672,500 to conserve 65 acres of farmland; and
- \$56,198 for improvements at Trustland Trails, including better access for people with disabilities.

The nonprofit Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition had asked for \$100 million for 2009-2011, the same amount awarded in the previous biennium.

Given the large budget shortfall, the coalition considered the \$70 million that was approved to be a success. The money comes from the sale of long-term bonds and does not take money away from basic services such as education, the coalition press release said.