

County receives funds for conservation projects

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A citizens advisory committee Thursday approved \$6 million in funding for a variety of wildlife and recreation projects in Yakima County.

Among the eight projects are the Kiwanis Park expansion, connecting the William O. Douglas trail in urban Yakima and habitat conservation in the Cowiche and Tieton watersheds.

The committee, the InterAgency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, meeting in Spokane, approved the grants as part of a larger list involving \$100 million statewide under the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

Carrie Bates of the Washington Wildfire and Recreation Coalition said the funding reflects a doubling of allocations from the Legislature this year. The funds were included in the state capital budget.

Approved projects include:

* \$1.6 million to the state Department of Fish and Wildlife to protect 5,705 acres of habitat in the shrub steppe/dry forest transition zone in the Cowiche and Tieton watersheds.

* \$796,883 to the city of Yakima to obtain easements and build pathways to fill in gaps in the William O. Douglas Trail.

* \$500,000 to the city of Yakima for expansion of upper Kiwanis Park to add a skate park, youth baseball field and other facilities.

* \$1.8 million to the state Department of Natural Resources to acquire more than 900 acres around the Klickitat Canyon Natural Resources Conservation area. Another \$88,734 goes to the agency to restore 50 acres habitat for the sandhill crane in the same area.

* \$715,000 to the state Department of Natural Resources to acquire land within the boundary of the Selah Cliffs Natural Area Preserve, east of Selah.

* \$645,867 to the state Department of Fish and Wildlife to purchase property at the confluence of the Naches and Tieton rivers.

* \$119,540 to the state Department of Fish and Wildlife to restore habitat on the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area.