

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Application of)	DOCKET TR-080590
)	
WASHINGTON STATE PARKS)	ORDER 01
AND RECREATION COMMISSION)	
)	
Applicant,)	ORDER GRANTING REQUEST FOR
)	DISBURSEMENT FROM THE GRADE
)	CROSSING PROTECTIVE FUND
Requesting Disbursement from the)	
Grade Crossing Protective Fund)	USDOT: 090183R
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On August 7, 2007, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) sent a “Notice of Opportunity to Apply for Grant Monies from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund” in Docket TR-071597 to various interested parties from the public and private sectors that were eligible to apply for Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF) grants.
- 2 On April 3, 2008, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks or the Applicant) filed with the Commission an application requesting a disbursement of \$18,300 from the GCPF to pay for a portion of a project related to crossing safety. On May 28, 2008, State Parks filed a letter requesting that the GCPF application be considered after July 1, 2009, because the scope of the project was being reevaluated. On October 21, 2009, State Parks filed a revised application for consideration.
- 3 State Parks seeks to resurface both approaches to the highway rail grade crossing located on Spearfish Road at Columbia Hills State Park in Klickitat County. The crossing is identified as USDOT #090183R. Average daily train traffic is 41 freight and passenger trains operating up to 70 miles per hour. Park visitors drive over the crossing multiple times to access the boat launch into the Columbia River. Other visitors park their vehicles north of the crossing and proceed on foot over the crossing to reach the river.
- 4 BNSF, which owns the rail line, upgraded the crossing surface from plank to concrete panels in 2007. As part of the crossing surface upgrade, BNSF extended the width of the crossing to 32 feet. Concrete panels are manufactured in eight foot standard length. In the summer of 2009, State Parks paved Spearfish Road, from the entry to the park off Highway 14, to the cattle guard which is located 90 feet north of the crossing. The road surface from the cattle guard to the crossing surface and on the south approach is

composed of loose gravel and rock. The loose gravel and rock have resulted from interim patching and filling of the roadway approaches to the crossing.

5 State Parks is proposing to resurface both approaches to the crossing with asphalt. The asphalt on the north approach would extend 85 feet to the cattle guard. The asphalt on the south approach would extend 90 feet to the boat launch turnaround area. The upgrade to asphalt eliminates the loose gravel and rock around the crossing which will increase traction for vehicles using the crossing. Consistent traction enables vehicles move safely over the crossing. The approaches to the crossing would also be widened to 32 feet to accommodate the wider crossing surface. The roadway approaches to the crossing are now approximately 20 to 24 feet.

6 There has been one accident at the crossing involving a vehicle pulling a boat.

7 A site visit by Commission Staff confirmed that the safety problem described by State Parks exists. The proposed resurfacing and widening of the roadway approaches will improve safety for vehicle users by removing the loose gravel and rock and providing a solid roadway surface leading to the crossing.

8 State Parks seeks \$18,300 to pay for a portion of the overall cost of the upgrades to the crossing located on Spearfish Road. State Parks proposes to contribute \$2,000 toward permit-associated labor costs. BNSF will provide flagging services during the repaving, which are estimated at \$1,000. There currently are funds available to pay for the project.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

9 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the State of Washington having authority to approve and administer disbursements from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. [RCW 81.53.271](#); [RCW 81.53.281](#).

10 (2) The project for which State Parks seeks disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund is eligible for funding consideration under Commission rules and complies with the requirements of [RCW 81.53.271](#), [RCW 81.53.281](#), and [WAC 480-62](#).

11 (3) Commission Staff investigated the request based on the review criteria specified in the Commission's rules and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions for administering the grant.

- 12 (4) This matter came before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on November 12, 2009.
- 13 (5) After reviewing State Parks' application filed on April 3, 2008, and revised on October 21, 2009, and giving due consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the request for disbursement of funds.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 14 Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission's application for disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund for crossing safety located at the intersection of Spearfish Road and BNSF Railway's tracks at Columbia Hills State Park is granted, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$18,300.
 - (2) The work for which the Grade Crossing Protective Fund disbursement was approved must conform to the project description specified in the application.
 - (3) Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission must sign and return the attached project agreement.
 - (4) Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.
 - (5) The project must be completed and the associated request for reimbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must be filed with the Commission no later than June 30, 2010.

The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the public interest, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective November 12, 2009.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAVID W. DANNER, Executive Director and Secretary