CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2013 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS
APPLICATION FOR FUNDS

PROJECT NAME: Cougar-Squak Corridor Addition

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): King County

Open Space System: Cougar-Squak Corridor
(Name of larger connected system, if any, such as Cedar River Greenway, Mountains to Sound, a Regional Trail, etc.)

Acquisition Project Size: ~216 acres
(Size in acres and proposed number of parcel(s) if a multi-parcel proposal)

CFT Application Amount: $500,000
(Dollar amount of CFT grant requested)

Type of Acquisition(s): ✶ Fee Title  ❑ Conservation Easement  ✶ Other: TDR

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Date: March 2013

PROJECT SUMMARY:
(In the space below, provide a brief but comprehensive description of the project. This should include the overall watershed, reach, trail or open space system if appropriate and specific targeted parcels and how they are significant individually and as part of an overall system.)

The target parcels are adjacent to King County Parks’ Cougar-Squak Corridor (the former Sunset Quarry site). Target parcels would add to the 5,300 acres of land already protected at Cougar and Squak Mountains, a corridor which extends further east through Tiger Mountain, Raging River Forest, and Cedar River Watershed.

A logging company has recently acquired six parcels comprising ~216 acres, most of which was formerly owned by the Issaquah Camping Club. Most of the site contains 50+-year-old forests on fairly steep slopes, with approximately 100-year-old stands on the easternmost parcel. Owner has filed a Forest Practice Application proposing to cut 95% of the timber volume off the site. However, he also is discussing sale of property to King County and is interested in making a sale work as quickly as we can move on it.

We seek to purchase this property to add to the protected land corridor at Cougar & Squak Mountains, create a new parking area on the south side of SR 900 (where parking is inadequate), and create new trail connections through the site over to Squak Mountain State Park. We hope to purchase the property with the forests intact, prior to harvest (though if he were to log, we would hope to work with the landowner on his harvest techniques as part of negotiations). Trust for Public Land may partner on this acquisition.
1. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES
Please review the attached evaluation criteria. For the proposed acquisition parcel(s), please mark those criteria that apply and thoroughly, yet succinctly, describe in the space below how the proposed acquisition satisfies each marked criteria. Please clearly describe how these criteria might be met at a landscape level, and how they apply to individual parcels. If restoration is part of the plan, please briefly describe the current condition and the hoped for restored condition that is the goal of the acquisition.

- A. Wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve
- B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources
- C. Scenic resources
- D. Community separator
- E. Historic/cultural resources
- F. Urban passive-use natural area/greenbelt
- G. Park/open space or natural corridor addition
- H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs

A. Wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve
The site would be expected to host species such as deer, black bear, cougar, bobcat, pileated woodpecker, owls, and other small wildlife species. The contiguity of this forest with the adjacent preserved corridors of land adds significant importance to these stands. The King County Wildlife Habitat Network is mapped through Cougar-Squak Corridor just north of the property. These acquisitions increase the amount of permanently protected open space and broaden the corridor width for wildlife moments, thereby decreasing habitat fragmentation and increasing habitat resource values between the two mountains. The easternmost 103-acre parcel contains stands that are approximately 100 years old; the western parcels on the slopes toward SR 900 contain stands approximately 50-60 years old. These all are mixed species stands (big leaf maple, western hemlock, red alder predominate, with Douglas-fir and western red cedar as well).

B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources
The property contains streams which are part of the headwaters of May Creek. Though modeling has not been performed to estimate impacts of clearcutting the site, clearcutting would typically change in water runoff volume, rate of water delivery, and sediment delivery to downstream water bodies. King County’s goal is to purchase this property prior to extensive forest harvest. Coho spawning and rearing is mapped in May Creek through river mile 8 (which includes the stretch of the creek along SR 900 at the site; StreamNet database).

C. Scenic Resources
This property is part of the watershed along SR 900, and is visible from Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park to the west, and visible from Squak Mountain State Park to the east. Removing forest cover from the slopes above SR 900 would have significant visual impact on the view from the road towards Squak Mountain, and on the view from neighboring hiking trails at Cougar and Squak.

G. Park/open space or natural corridor addition
The proposed acquisitions build on a large protected corridor of land: 3,200 acres at Cougar Mountain, an adjacent 481 acres at Cougar/Squak Corridor, 1,581 acres at Squak Mountain State Park, 266 acres at Squak-Tiger Corridor, leading east to the 14,000 acre Tiger Mountain Forest complex, the Raging River State Forest and the Cedar River Watershed. These parcels offer opportunity to increase passive recreation trails and expand hiking opportunities throughout Cougar-Squak Corridor (where there have been two recent CFT/PEL-funded acquisitions at Pacific Topsoils and Debbie’s View), and add a western access route into Squak Mountain State Park.

H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs
This site would allow us to construct a new parking lot on the south side of SR 900 for access to Cougar/Squak Corridor and Squak Mountain. We have just twelve parking spots at the nearby Cougar Mountain Wilderness Trailhead on the north side of SR 900. At the existing entrance to Cougar/Squak Corridor trails at Pacific Topsoils, there is only a shoulder pullout for 2-3 cars off SR 900; we have been unable to reach agreement with an adjacent utility at this location to create a hoped-for parking lot on the south side of SR 900, and the utility has not legalized our trail access through their utility-owned parcel. These new properties would give us the opportunity to create a new parking area and entrance to Cougar/Squak Corridor. Existing roads on the property from the campground provide a framework for new trail routes into the site.
2. ADDITIONAL FACTORS
For the proposed acquisition parcel(s), please mark all criteria that apply and thoroughly, yet succinctly, describe in the space below how the proposed acquisition satisfies each marked criteria.

- A. Educational/interpretive opportunity
- B. Threat of loss of open space resources
- C. Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed
- D. Partnerships - Describe any public or private partnerships that will enhance this project
- E. Is the property identified in an adopted park, open space, comprehensive, or community plan?
- F. Transferable Development Credits (TDC) participation

B. Threat of loss of open space resources
There is very real threat of clearcut and/or of development on this property. The current owner is a logging company which has filed a Forest Practice Application on the site to remove 95% of the timber volume. If we are able to work expeditiously with him on acquisition, he may be able to hold off logging the site (or take a more measured approach to harvest) as we work to acquire the land. A prior owner filed a plat in 2007 for 43 homes on these and adjacent parcels, with highly engineered access roads climbing the ridges from SR 900. The plat is still at the permit department and has not yet expired, therefore could theoretically be pursued. There is very strong community interest in seeing these properties remain uncleared and undeveloped in order to avoid flooding impacts to May Creek, and to achieve open space preservation.

C. Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed
Single landowner holds all six parcels. He is willing to sell to King County, though has urgency to begin a phased sale within a year in order to address debt obligations. He has been entertaining other offers on the property, but remains interested in working with the county on purchase if we can demonstrate commitment and clear fundraising plan for the property. We propose a full fee acquisition. The four northern parcels are of primary interest to the county; community members have suggested we may be able to find a private buyer for the southern two parcels. There are a few campground sites which appear to be occupied year-round by people, who would need to move from the property upon acquisition (would be researched during acquisition work).

D. Partnerships
We may work with Trust for Public Land on this acquisition (yet to be determined at the time of application submittal). Many community partners are interested in seeing these properties remain uncleared, undeveloped, and preserved as open space. Issaquah Alps Trails Club has taken the lead in generating community interest and support on these parcels, and brought media attention from the Seattle Times (front page article on 3/2/2013), several Issaquah Reporter articles, a KOMO television story, and a KIRO radio story. Councilmember Dunn provided a letter of support to the CFT Committee for this acquisition.

E. Is the property identified in an adopted park, open space, comprehensive or community plan?
Both the Comp Plan and the Park Plan contain policies that direct acquisition, planning, and stewardship of KC Parks. The acquisition of these parcels is consistent with the following policy direction:
- Be a “regional provider of open spaces with a major focus on systems of open space corridors that conserve natural resources and provide recreation, education and interpretive opportunities, fish and wildlife habitat and scenic beauty.” (Park Plan Policy G-101)
- Emphasize acquisition and development of sites that provide for multiple benefits (Park Plan Policy CIP-120)

F. Transferable Development Credits (TDC) application
This Cougar/Squak property is in a focus area for the County’s TDR agreement with City of Issaquah. If we purchase this property, the development rights would go into the TDR Bank; when the bank sells these credits into the City, we can recapture funding and use the proceeds to further additional King County priority properties in this area.
3. STEWARDSHIP AND MAINTENANCE
How will the property be stewarded and maintained? Does the property lend itself to volunteer stewardship opportunities? How will ongoing stewardship and maintenance efforts be funded?

King County Parks’ maintenance work would be funded with Parks Levy operating funds. A new proposed Parks Levy is expected to be on the ballot in fall 2013 for a public vote in King County, which would provide our new source of maintenance funds.

Depending on opportunity and site plans, there may be capital or operating work on site which is eligible for specific trail or restoration grants, or for recreational amenity development with local stakeholder groups through Parks’ Community Grants Program.

Typical King County maintenance includes regular site inspections to identify and address any issues arising on site in regard to public health and safety, property encroachments, natural resource damage, infrastructure damage, trail condition, etc. If a parking area is developed on site, then inspections and maintenance are much higher in frequency to ensure appropriate use of the parking area.

We assess forest health at all King County Parks sites. It is possible that this is a site on which forest stewardship activities may occur if recommended by such an assessment.

King County anticipates partnership with local stakeholder groups such as Issaquah Alps Trails Club, Washington Trails Association, and/or Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

| 1) TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT       | CFT: $500,000 |
| 2) TOTAL PEL APPLICATION AMOUNT   | Parks Levy: $1,500,000 |

²Allowable CFT acquisition costs (Ordinance 14714): The disbursement of funds shall be made only for capital project expenditures that include costs of acquiring real property, including interests in real property, and the following costs: the cost of related relocation of eligible occupants, cost of appraisal, cost of appraisal review, costs of title insurance, closing costs, pro rata real estate taxes, recording fees, compensating tax, hazardous waste substances reports, directly related staff costs and related legal and administrative costs, but shall not include the cost of preparing applications for conservation futures funds.

³King County projects only, if applicable.

Estimation of property value:
Briefly note how land values have been estimated (i.e., appraisal, property tax assessment, asking price, letter of value or other means).

Landowner’s estimate of value is $4.5 to 5 million. Appraisals will help us determine value of property. This is first year of an anticipated two years of grant applications; we should have more precise numbers for our second application.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT COSTS</th>
<th>ESTIMATED DOLLAR AMOUNT OR RANGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total property interest value</td>
<td>$4,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title and appraisal work</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing, fees, taxes</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relocation</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazardous waste reports</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<td>Directly related staff, administration and legal costs</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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<td>Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)</td>
<td>$4,560,000</td>
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<td>MATCHING FUNDS: Existing Sources (CFT can only provide a maximum of 50% of anticipated project costs)</td>
<td>DATE (Expended or Committed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total CFT Funds Previously Received This Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds Currently Identified</td>
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<td>Unidentified Remaining Match Need</td>
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Unidentified remaining match need: What funds are anticipated and what is the time frame? Please briefly discuss how the unidentified remaining match need above will be met.

We anticipate this will be a multi-year grant request, seeking funding from 2014 and 2015 CFT & Parks Levy – Regional Open Space Acquisition funds. It may be a candidate for state Recreation & Conservation Office funding, which would be applied for in 2014, and awarded in 2015.

5. IN–KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief Activity Description</th>
<th>Dollar Value of In-kind Contribution</th>
<th>Status (Completed or Proposed)</th>
<th>Activity Date Range (Completion Date or Proposed Completion Date)</th>
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6. ATTACHED MAPS (Two maps are now required: 1) site map and 2) general location map; you may also include one additional map, aerial photo or site photo)

8 ½ x 11” maps are preferred, but 11 x 17” is acceptable if folded and hole-punched for insertion into a three-ring binder.

Site Map that shows the following:
- Each parcel proposed for acquisition in yellow or distinct shading and an indication of any parcel proposed for less than fee simple acquisition, such as a conservation easement;
- Location of any proposed development to the site such as parking, trails or other facilities;
- Location of any proposed site restoration;
- Existing adjacent public (local, state or federal) parks or open spaces labeled and shown in dark green or distinct shading.

Location Map that shows the following:
- Other permanently protected open spaces (private, non profit, institutional, etc.) shown in light green or distinct shading;
- Major water courses such as creeks, rivers, lakes or wetlands;
- Major roads, arterial roads or regional trails.
- Map scale: This map should show approximately a ten-mile radius around the proposed acquisition(s).