



King County

CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2015 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS APPLICATION FOR FUNDS

PROJECT NAME: Bass/Beaver Lake Complex

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): King County

Open Space System: Bass/Beaver Lake Complex Natural Area

(Name of larger connected system, if any, such as Cedar River Greenway, Mountains to Sound, a Regional Trail, etc.)

Acquisition Project Size: 46.2 acres **CFT Application Amount:** \$662,500
(Size in acres and Proposed number of parcel(s) if a multi-parcel proposal) *(Dollar Amount of CFT grant requested)*

Type of Acquisition(s): **Fee Title** **Conservation Easement** **Other:**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Title: Green/White River Basin Steward **Fax:** (206) 296-0192

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Seattle, WA 98104 **Date:** March 13, 2014

PROJECT SUMMARY:

This proposal would preserve portions of the Bass/Beaver Lake Complex which includes 3 lakes, a large wetland system, Cristy Creek, and forested uplands. This ecosystem provides important functions for:

- **Wildlife:** Complex provides highest bird species diversity in the county, including State Priority Species: bald eagle, pileated woodpecker, wood duck, bufflehead, common loon, band-tailed pigeon.
- **Wetlands:** Wetlands associated with lakes is one of largest wetland communities in KC and is WA State Priority Habitat. Northwestern salamander, Pacific tree frog, red-legged frog are present.
- **Groundwater:** Complex is in KC-designated Area Highly Susceptible to Groundwater Contamination, providing significant groundwater recharge to Green River.
- **Identified as Top Priority for Preservation:** Waterways 2000 and Last Best Places in the Green River Watershed both prioritized the protection of the lake complex.
- **Complements Protection Efforts:** State Parks, Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, and King County own land in complex. This proposal compliments previous protection efforts.
- **Promotes Recreational Opportunities:** Parcels provide opportunity to construct trail linking Bass, Beaver, and Dandy lakes with the Green River Gorge.
- **Development Pressure:** Development pressure is high because parcels are near lakes, have views of Mt. Rainier, access to Hwy. 169 and Enumclaw and Black Diamond.

1. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

- 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

Wildlife Habitat/Plants

Birds: The lake complex provides highest bird species diversity in King County (KC) (KC Wetland Inventory 1990). State Priority Species: bald eagle, pileated woodpecker, wood duck, bufflehead, great blue heron, common loon, and band-tailed pigeon. Others: golden eagle, turkey vulture, osprey, green heron, kingfisher, ruffed grouse, least sandpiper, goldfinch, Bewick's/marsh/Pacific wren, Swainson's thrush, rufous hummingbird, spotted towhee.

Wetlands: Two wooded (forested) wetland plant communities are located within the parcels at two and 10 acres, and are designated as State Priority Habitat. Only 5.6% of the wetlands in KC are mapped as forested wetlands, and less than half of these are coniferous. Vegetation in these wetlands is very sensitive to fluctuations in water levels and water chemistry; nearby development could impact both of these parameters.

Mammals: North Rainier elk herd – White River Unit traverses area (one of 10 elk herds in state), along with cougar, black bear, bobcat, red fox, coyote, river otter; weasel, mink, muskrat, mountain beaver, and bats.

Amphibians/mussels: Northwestern salamander, Pacific tree frog, red-legged frog are present.

Salmon Habitat/Aquatic Resources

Chum, coho, and steelhead salmon are present in lower mile of Cristy Cr. which enters the Green R. at RM 44, and supports cutthroat/rainbow trout between Dandy and Bass lakes. The Middle Green River was identified as one of the 10 most important river reaches in Puget Sound for salmon recovery (Trust for Public Land 2001). The southwestern Plum Creek parcel protects headwaters of Newaukum Cr., which contains Chinook/steelhead. The *WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan (2006)* provides policies which support this acquisition:

- Policy IN-6: Protecting and Improving Hydrology and Water Quality/Quantity.
- Necessary Future Conditions: Sources of cool, clean water from surface and ground water are maintained.
- Program WW-15: Develop a Coordinated Acquisition Program for Natural Areas.

Acquisition would protect an *Area Highly Susceptible to Groundwater Contamination (KC Comp. Plan 2008)*.

Scenic Resources

The lake complex provides the opportunity to see low-elevation, minimally developed lakes and wetlands. Views from Mt. Rainier are common throughout the complex. Cristy Creek is particularly beautiful between Beaver and Dandy lakes where it cascades over boulders and downed logs. Waterfowl and many other bird species can commonly be seen in the lakes and wetlands.

Community Separator

The Bass/Beaver Lake Natural Area acts as an excellent urban-rural separator as it's located between Black Diamond and Enumclaw, and many single-family homes to the west. The landscape between the lakes and Green R. is still relatively undeveloped; development would significantly compromise habitat value in this area and eliminate important open space linkages. Preserving these parcels would minimize residential sprawl potential.

Park/Open Space or Natural Corridor Addition

Acquisition of these parcels would be an important step in linking the lake complex with blocks of public land along the Green River, creating extensive habitat connectivity. Currently, there are 2,500 acres of state land and 1,400 acres of King County lands along the Middle Green River. In the last 10 years, KC has preserved over ~280 acres in the lake complex.

Passive Recreation Opportunity

The lake complex provides wonderful passive recreation opportunities, including hiking, birding, and non-motorized boating. A trail could be constructed from the KC parcel in the SW portion of the complex to the Green River Gorge via Dandy Lake and the recently acquired Plum Creek properties. Bird-watching blinds could be constructed near the lakes to allow waterfowl viewing while minimizing wildlife disturbance. State Parks is also interested in connecting the three lakes with parks along the River.

2. ADDITIONAL FACTORS

For the proposed acquisition parcel(s), please (1) mark all criteria that apply, and (2) 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

Educational/interpretive opportunity

The priority acquisition property furthest to the north in this application would offer a critical north-south trail link through the lake complex. Preserving the lake complex would provide people with the opportunity to access minimally developed, low-elevation lakes, which is relatively uncommon in KC. The lakes' unique hydrology, fish and wildlife habitat, multiple wetland types, and ecological restoration projects could be highlighted with signage and viewing platforms. Black Diamond, Enumclaw, and south KC residents would benefit from these educational and interpretive opportunities, along with recreational improvements that could eventually be made.

Threat of loss of open space resources

The lake complex is relatively flat, easily accessed by roads (especially Hwy. 169), and would be an excellent setting for view-homes (Mt. Rainier and lake views). Development and post-development impacts could impact wildlife populations and associated corridors, diminish habitat, and degrade water quality and wetlands.

Ownership complexity/willing seller/ownership interest

Both landowners targeted for acquisition are willing to negotiate an acquisition transaction.

Partnerships

King County has worked with the Middle Green River Coalition (MGRC) for over 12 years with the intent to preserve land within the lake complex, and prevent them from being harvested for timber or sold for development. This application is the culmination of this effort. State Parks owns 2,500 acres along the Green River and is supportive of these acquisitions because they increase the potential to create a trail connecting the lakes with the parks along the river.

Is property identified in adopted park, open space, comprehensive, or community plan?

The Bass/Beaver Lake complex is identified as critical for open space preservation in several documents:

- *Salmon Habitat Plan* (WRIA 9 2006) provides several policies which support acquisition in this lake complex (Policy IN-6, Necessary Future Conditions, Program WW-15).
- *Last Best Places in the Green River Watershed* (KC 2002) identified the lake complex as one of the highest priorities in the entire Middle Green River watershed.
- *Near-term Action Agenda for Salmon Habitat Conservation* (WRIA 9 2002) identified action items to protect habitat such as the lakes and Cristy Creek (WW Action 2, MG Action 1, MG Action 4).
- *Habitat Limiting Factors and Reconnaissance Assessment Report, WRIA 9* (WA Cons. Comm. 2000) identified lower Cristy Creek as habitat for four salmonid species.
- *Direction for 2000* (WRIA 9 2000) stated that acquisition and restoration in the Middle Green River basin is one of the highest priorities for early action in WRIA 9.
- *Waterways 2000* (KC 1995) identified the lake complex for preservation.

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?

Stewardship and Maintenance

King County's plan for providing site stewardship will be based on standards and protocols commonly accepted and followed by resource planners and land managers charged with managing natural areas for which primary purpose and use is fish and wildlife habitat preservation. Basic site information will be gathered and incorporated into site management activities for both short and longer-term stewardship of the site. Depending on actual needs, funding for stewardship, maintenance or restoration will come from different sources, such as surface water management funds, but not from county general fund sources.

Volunteer Stewardship Opportunities

Volunteers - Bernie McKinney is the Park Ambassador for the Bass/Beaver Lake Natural Area (sponsors restoration projects, inspects for illegal activity, assist with litter control). The Middle Green River Coalition, a community group active in acquisition and restoration efforts in the area, intends to participate in the stewardship effort. Volunteers from schools and community groups from Black Diamond, Enumclaw, and unincorporated KC have been, and will be recruited.

Trails - King County DNRP will develop a trails plan if one is considered appropriate on-site. Any trails that are constructed would be "soft" and consistent with the primary use of the site as an undeveloped natural area.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT*	\$662,500
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Estimation of property value:

Briefly describe how land values have been estimated, i.e. appraisal, property tax assessment, asking price, letter of value or other means.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS (dollars)	(a range may be included)
Total property interest value	\$1,283,000
Title and appraisal work	\$15,000
Closing, fees, taxes	\$5,000
Relocation	\$10,000
Hazardous waste reports	\$2,000
Directly related staff, administration and legal costs	\$10,000
Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)	\$1,325,000

MATCHING FUNDS SOURCES	Date Expended or Committed	Match Funds Expended or Committed (Amount)
New Parks Levy	Requesting funds for 2015 expenditure	\$662,500
Existing CFT		\$767
Total Matching Funds Currently Identified		\$662,500 (Proposed Parks Levy)
<i>Unidentified Remaining Match Need:</i>		\$0

Unidentified remaining match need

Please discuss briefly how the unidentified remaining match need above will be met:

All match needs are identified above.

5. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

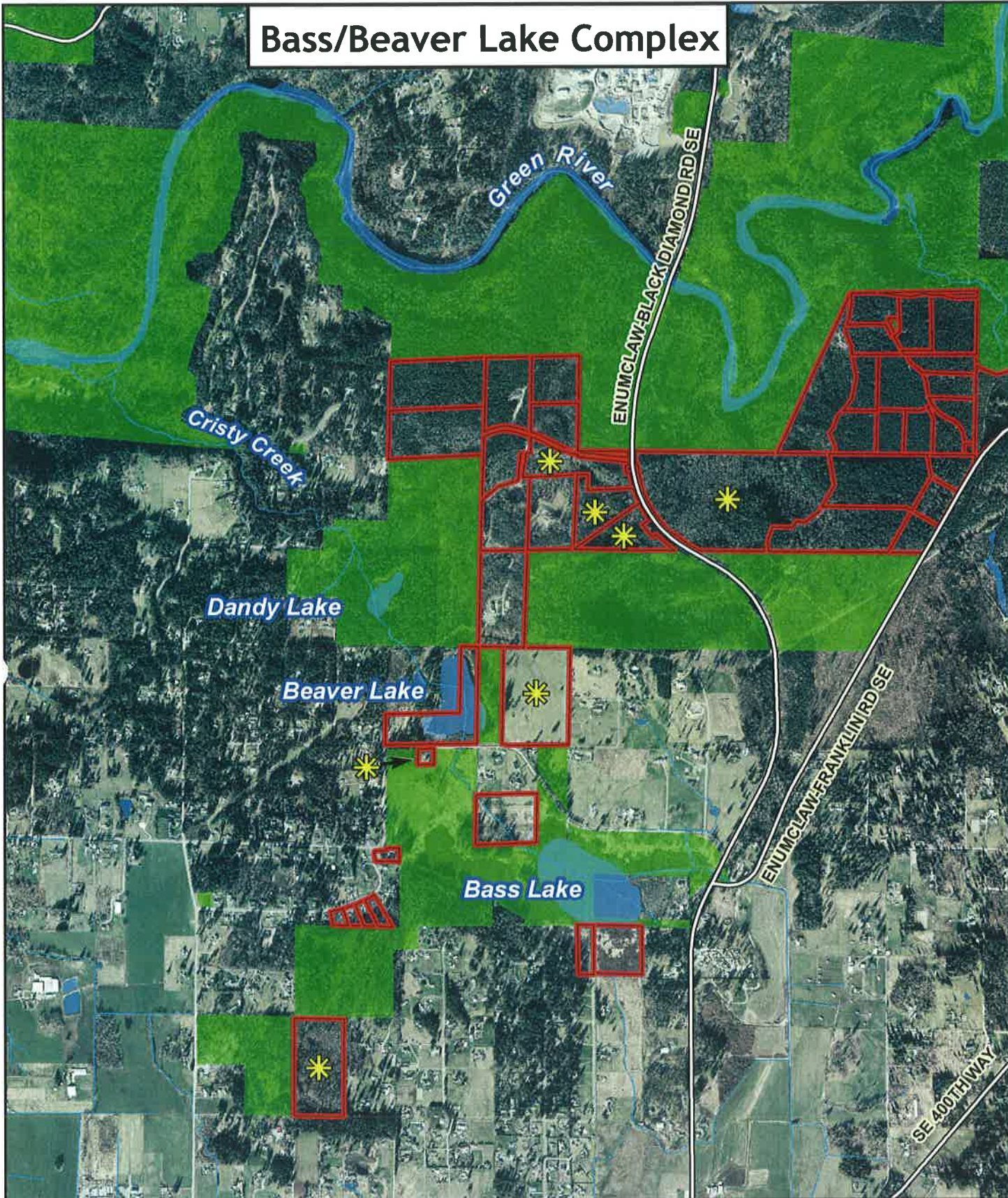
Brief Activity Description	Dollar Value of In-kind Contribution	Status (Completed, or Proposed in future?)	Activity Date Range (When was activity completed? or, date proposed in future)
Middle Green River Coalition	\$5,000	Proposed	Stewardship, educational activities
Park Ambassador	\$5,000/year	Proposed	Ongoing stewardship
TOTAL	\$10,000		

6. ATTACHED MAP

Please attach a one-page, 8 1/2'x 11" 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 public (local, state or federal) park or open spaces, labeled and shown in dark green or distinct shading;
- 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: The map should show approximately a one-mile radius around the proposed acquisition(s).*

Bass/Beaver Lake Complex



Initial Negotiations



Target Acquisition Parcels



Water Courses



Public Lands

Photography Date:
Spring 2010



King County

Department of
Natural Resources and Parks
Water and Land Resources Division



April 9, 2014

The information included on this map has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and is subject to change without notice. King County makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, as to accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or rights to the use of such information. King County shall not be liable for any general, special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages including, but not limited to, lost revenues or lost profits resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained on this map. Any sale of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.

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