



King County

K.C. Date Received _____

CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2015 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.)

*Amended, see Committee
\$400,000
Rep. pt*

Acquisition Project Size: ~226 acres

(Size in acres and proposed number of parcel(s) if a multi-parcel proposal)

CFT Application Amount: \$390,000

(Dollar amount of CFT grant requested)

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Seattle, WA 98104

Date: March 2014

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 226 acres are adjacent to King County Parks' Cougar-Squak Corridor. In December 2012, a logging company acquired the six parcels, 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 80+-year-old stands on the easternmost parcel. Owner filed a Forest Practice Application to cut 95% of the timber volume off the site.

A partnership between King County Parks and the Trust for Public Land led to the successful purchase of the property by TPL in January 2014. With the support of the CFT Citizen's Committee 2014 funding recommendation, King County Parks purchased Phase 1 of the property (123 acres) from TPL for \$2,843,000. We seek to complete Phase 2 purchase (103 acres) in January 2015 for ~\$2,225,000. The 2015 request of \$1,390,000 would supplement the \$835,000 recommended CFT-PL reallocation (at 3/5/2014 CFT meeting) to complete the purchase. TPL will be able to move their revolving funds to other conservation purchases in the region.

We seek to purchase this property to conserve forest habitat, to create a new parking area on the south side of SR 900 (where parking is inadequate), and create new trail connections through the site to Squak Mountain State Park. Adds 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.

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.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. Wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve | <input type="checkbox"/> E. Historic/cultural resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources | <input type="checkbox"/> F. Urban passive-use natural area/greenbelt |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. Scenic resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> G. Park/open space or natural corridor addition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D. Community separator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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. These acquisitions increase the amount of permanently protected open space, broaden the corridor width for wildlife movements, and decrease potential habitat fragmentation. The easternmost 103-acre parcel contains stands that are approximately 80-100 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, and a May Creek tributary flows through the entryway of the site along SR 900. Retaining forest cover in the headwaters was a goal of the purchase, to prevent changes in water runoff volume, rate of water delivery, and sediment delivery to downstream water bodies. Coho spawning and rearing is mapped in this May Creek tributary (which includes the stretch of the creek along SR 900 at the site; StreamNet database).

C. Scenic Resources

This property is part of the viewshed 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 had 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, 1581 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 southeast side of SR 900 for access to Cougar/Squak Corridor and Squak Mountain. We have just twelve parking spots at the nearby Cougar Mountain Jim Whittaker/Wilderness Trailhead on the other 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 entryway parcel. These new properties 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. Appropriate uses of the site will be determined during site planning work.

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

At the time of last year's application, there was a very real threat of clearcut and/or of development on this property. The owner had filed a Forest Practice Application on the site to remove 95% of the timber volume, and a prior vested plat threatened 43 homes with highly engineered access roads climbing the ridges from SR 900. There was very strong community interest in seeing these properties remain uncleared and undeveloped in order to preserve forests, avoid flooding impacts to May Creek, and to achieve open space preservation.

C. Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed

King County and TPL worked hard the first half of 2013 with the landowner to reach a purchase and sale agreement. Without TPL partnering with the county to bring revolving funds and secure the site up front, the property may well have been logged. The landowner was heavily investigating logging, developing, and was entertaining other property offers. The site has now been secured by TPL using revolving funds, but the county has committed to complete the purchase by January 2015 if at all possible.

D. Partnerships

Many community partners were interested in seeing these properties remain uncleared, undeveloped, and preserved as open space. Issaquah Alps Trails Club took 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 in 2013 and joined us on the 2013 CFT field trip.

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. We are placing the development rights in 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 (funded 2014-2019 due to recent vote in August 2013).

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.

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.

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^a	CFT: \$390,000
2) TOTAL PEL APPLICATION AMOUNT^b	Parks Levy: \$1,000,000

^aAllowable 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.*

^bKing 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).

TPL's appraisal and negotiations yielded a purchase price of \$5,000,000. Total funding needed for project is estimated at \$5,067,587 which includes additional costs for closing costs, staff time, taxes, etc.

Phase 1: We secured \$2,842,569 for Phase 1 in 2014 funds.

Phase 2: Need an additional \$2,225,000. Reallocation of \$835,000 in CFT/Parks Levy was recommended at the 3/5/2014 review meeting. Total remaining funding need is \$1,390,000.

PROJECT COSTS	ESTIMATED DOLLAR AMOUNT OR RANGE
Total property interest value	\$2,163,676
Title and appraisal work	\$0
Closing, fees, taxes	\$50,000
Relocation	\$0
Hazardous waste reports	\$0
Directly related staff, administration and legal costs	\$10,000
Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)	~\$2,225,000

MATCHING FUNDS: Existing Sources (CFT can only provide a maximum of 50% of anticipated project costs)	DATE (Expended or Committed)	DOLLAR AMOUNT (Expended or Committed)
Parks Levy	January 2014 received & expended	\$1,500,000
REET	January 2014 received & expended	\$842,569
Reallocation recommended at 3/5/2014 meeting (not sure of CFT vs. PEL amounts)	March 5, 2014 recommendation; to be received summer 2014	\$835,000
Total CFT Funds Previously Received This Project	January 2014 received & expended	\$500,000
Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds Currently Identified		\$3,677,569
Unidentified Remaining Match Need		\$0

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 are over-matched for the 50% match required for CFT. We received and spent \$2,342,569 in Parks Levy and REET to leverage \$500,000 CFT for Phase 1 purchase. It is unclear what amounts of CFT vs. Parks Levy the proposed \$835,000 reallocation would consist of. We are requesting \$390,000 CFT and \$1,000,000 Parks Levy this year.

This site may be a candidate for state Recreation & Conservation Office funding, which would be applied for in 2014, and awarded in 2015; if received it can reimburse CFT/Parks Levy funds spent on the site.

5. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

Brief Activity Description	Dollar Value of In-kind Contribution	Status (Completed or Proposed)	Activity Date Range (Completion Date or Proposed Completion Date)
TOTAL			

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).*

Cougar-Squak Corridor Vicinity Map

-  Parcels
-  King County Parks
-  State Parks
-  Publicly Owned Lands
-  Water

0 4,200 8,400 16,800
Feet



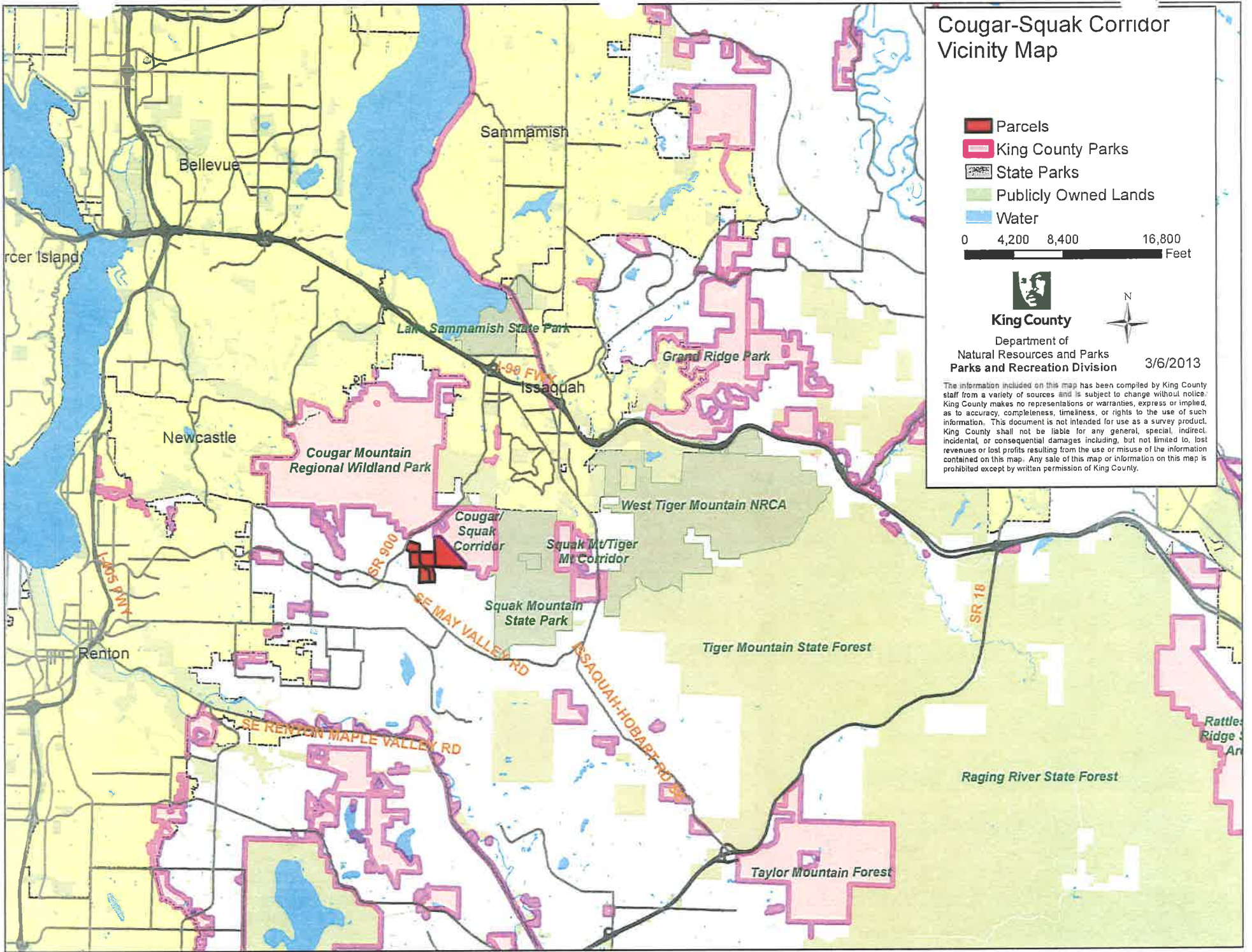
King County

Department of
Natural Resources and Parks
Parks and Recreation Division










3/6/2013


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Cougar-Squak Corridor
Public Land Connections

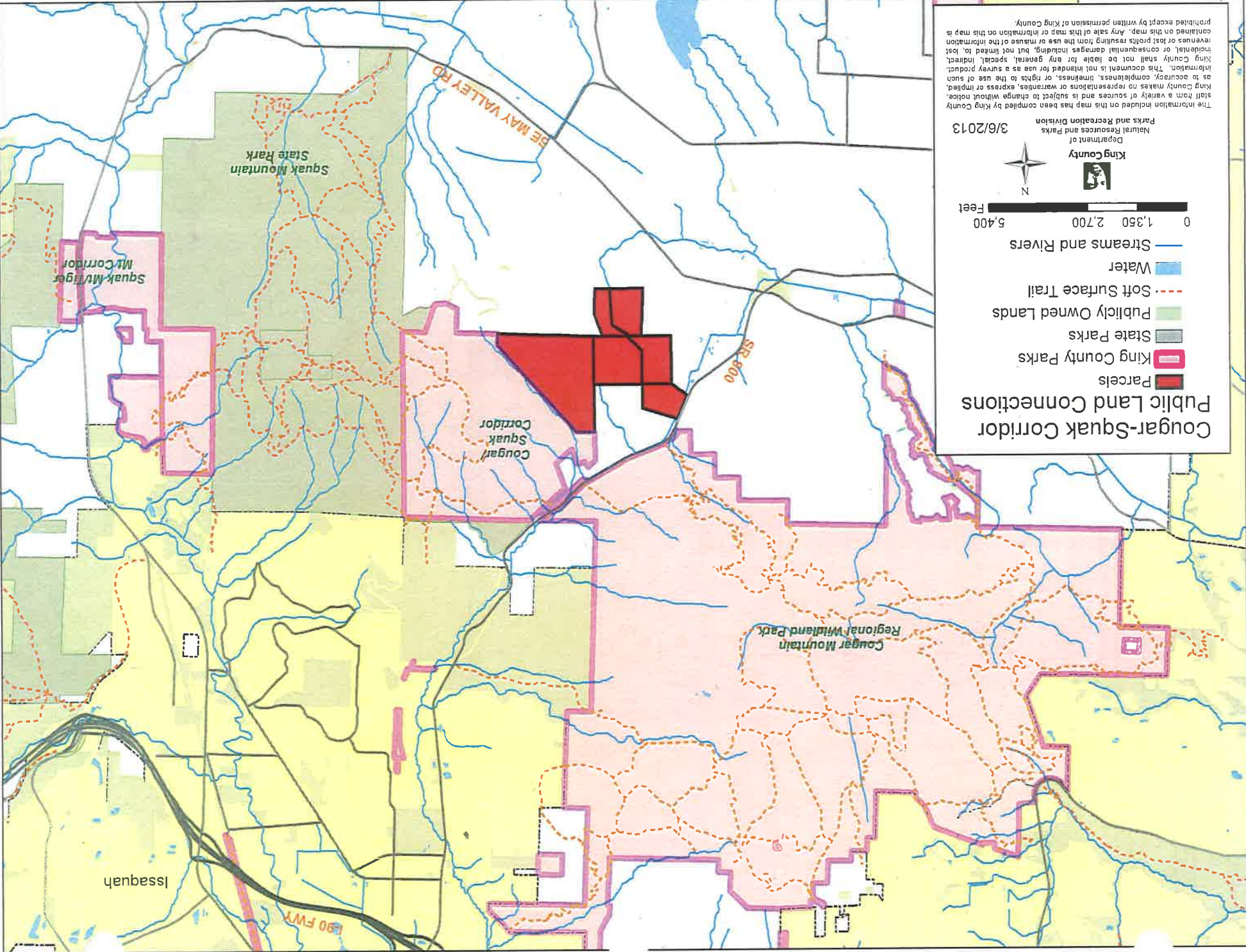
-  Parcels
-  King County Parks
-  State Parks
-  Publicly Owned Lands
-  Soft Surface Trail
-  Water
-  Streams and Rivers

0 1,350 2,700 5,400 Feet

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 3/6/2013

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Cougar-Squak Corridor Site Map

- First Priority
 - Second Priority
 - Phase 1 purchase
 - King County Parks
 - State Parks
 - Soft Surface Trail
 - Streams and Rivers
- 0 337.5 675 1,350 Feet

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Department of
Natural Resources and Parks
Parks and Recreation Division

3/11/2014

