



King County

K.C. Date Received _____

CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2015 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS APPLICATION FOR FUNDS

PROJECT NAME Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area Addition

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): King County

Open Space System: Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area/Natural Resource Conservation Area
(Name of larger connected system, if any, such as Cedar River Greenway, Mountains to Sound, a Regional Trail, etc.)

Acquisition Project Size: 5 parcels*; @ 80 acres **CFT Application Amount:** \$175,000
(Size in acres and proposed number of parcel(s) if a multi-parcel proposal) (Dollar amount of CFT grant requested)

*2023099001 (40.55 ac), 2023099035 (2.48 ac.), 2023099036 (12.24 ac); 2023099037 (12.35 ac), 2023099038 (12.45 ac)

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Seattle WA 98104 **Date:** 3/13/2014

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.)

This proposed project would facilitate joint acquisition by King County Parks and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WADNR) of approximately 80 acres of land which would become an addition to WADNR's 10,000 acre Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA). Through this proposal, the County would acquire the parcels' development rights through the purchase of a conservation easement on the properties and WADNR would acquire the land. As a result, key properties, currently a void in a large and ecologically significant area of publicly owned lands, would be preserved. The target parcels lie between County Parks' Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area and WADNR's NRCA. If these targeted properties are not acquired, they could be converted for residential use, causing loss of forest cover, fragmentation and degradation to important fish and wildlife habitat, impacts to the scenic character and reduced opportunities for low impact recreational use in a highly popular visited area of the county.

Trust for Public Lands (TPL) is negotiating the purchase for King County and WADNR and is currently in discussions with the landowner regarding an acquisition option. This acquisition has the support of Forterra, Mountains to Sound Greenway, MidForc and various other stakeholder and recreation user groups.

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 wildlife inhabiting this area is typical of west side mature second growth forest habitats and thus includes a variety of migratory and resident birds, mammals, amphibians and fish. Species known to use this area are: black bear, cougar, coyote, bobcat, mule deer, raccoon, mountain beaver, barred owls, pileated woodpecker, Pacific tree frog, Pacific giant salamander and red-legged frogs (which are Species of Local Importance as designated in KCCP Policy E-436). Resident elk also utilize lands within the project area. Members of the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group have expressed an interest in conserving additional elk habitat lands.

B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources

The Middle Fork Snoqualmie River is a Class 1 Stream and a Shoreline of Statewide Significance. In addition, the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area is a Waterways 2000 Program site. That program was created to protect some of the County's threatened high-quality riparian habitat and aquatic biological systems by preventing loss of critical spawning and rearing habitat. Waterways also stressed the systems' role in preserving passive use recreation, scenic and cultural resources; conserving wildlife and enhancing existing protected resources.

Tributaries located with the target parcel area join the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River. Snoqualmie Falls, located below the project area, acts as a natural barrier to anadromous salmonids, but above the falls, significant populations of resident cutthroat and rainbow trout occur in the river. Spawning and rearing habitat for these trout species occur in both the mainstem as well as perennial tributaries. Bull trout, a species listed as threatened, are also assumed to live above the falls. The target parcels contain year round spring fed streams which support a stable population of cutthroat, but undersized culverts block passage. Public ownership of the parcels would facilitate stream restoration and replacement of the culverts.

C. Scenic resources

The subject parcels lie within the Mountains to Sound Greenway (Greenway). Acquisition of these parcels will create larger scenic open space area, filling in gaps in vast public ownership, consistent with the Greenway's goal of protecting open space lands from Seattle to Central Washington in order to enhance scenic beauty, conserve wildlife habitat and provide for recreational opportunities. The Greenway has formally expressed support of this acquisition. In addition, views of the surrounding landscape (including nearby peaks) can be seen from these parcels.

G. Park/open space or natural corridor addition

These target parcels lie within a large and critical location natural open space corridor, just south of King County's 660 acre Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area and directly east of Washington State Department of Natural Resources' (WADNR) 9000 acre Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA) Because this proposal involves King County acquisition of conservation easement on land that would be owned by the State, the properties are proposed as an addition to the State's NRCA but would be co-managed by the County primarily through the its responsibilities for monitoring easement conditions. The properties lie south of Snoqualmie Forest, east of the Snoqualmie River and northwest of the City of Snoqualmie; they are located in rural King County within WRIA7 (Snohomish), Snoqualmie River Basin

H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs

Snoqualmie Valley is an extremely popular location for outdoor recreation, located within 35 miles from Seattle, accessible to over 1 million people. Acquiring these parcels would result in new and increased experiences for low impact trail users; a well maintained trail already exists on the property. Mailbox Peak

Trailhead (access to a 6 mile trail) is located on an adjacent WANDR owned parcel. Letters of support sent to the County by stakeholders (Middle Fork Outdoor Recreation Coalition (MidFORC), Mountains To Sound Greenway, Alpine Lakes Protection Society, Mountaineers and Valley Camp Ministries) during the last grant round indicate broad support for the project.

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

A. Educational/interpretive opportunity

Since the target parcels would be an addition to thousands of acres of public lands within the County's Natural Area and WADNR's NRCA, there are excellent opportunities to build upon interpretive messaging provided on existing signage within those two sites. Possible themes include educational information about the area's fish and wildlife habitat value, importance of invasive control, as well as about sustainable forestry and forest restoration. In addition, the parcels lie immediately adjacent to Valley Camp, a well established, camp retreat center focused on outdoor experiences creating strong possibilities for partnerships for environmental education.

B. Threat of loss of open space resources

This proposed acquisition project is needed to fill a void in a significant matrix of protected county, state and federal lands. Although 98% of the 10,000 acre Middle Fork Snoqualmie Valley is publicly owned, there are several key threatened priority parcels remaining, these target parcels are among those. These parcels lie between (south of) King County's Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area and WADNR's Middle Fork Snoqualmie NRCA (directly to the east). If these targeted properties are not acquired, they could be developed further for residential use, causing loss of forest cover, fragmentation and degradation to wildlife habitat, impacts to the scenic character and reduced opportunities for passive recreational use of the property, including development adjacent to a trailhead. The fact that the owner is actively marketing the properties increases the potential threat of loss.

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

The properties are available for sale and the owner has already had discussions with the Trust for Public Lands (TPL). A few offers have been received to date but the owner rejected those. The seller is aware of King County's and WADNR's interest in acquiring the land and the owners have expressed some interest in seeing that the lands become conserved. The Trust for Public Lands is working with both the County and State to assist with negotiations with the goal of developing an option agreement.

D. Partnerships - Describe any public or private partnerships that will enhance this project

King County and the State are working together to acquire the remaining priority threatened properties within the larger the entire Middle Fork Snoqualmie Gateway Project area that was outlined in the previous CFT grant application. Completion of the project acreage of this proposed acquisition will involve a phased approach. Most of the lands within the Gateway project are proposed for state ownership; the county has an interest in partnering with the State through the acquisition of development rights, resulting in County owned conservation easements. This approach has been successful on several other priority conservation lands, such as the Upper Raging River Forest.

Both King County Parks and WADNR partners with various stakeholders to plan and maintain backcountry trails; such groups could also help with trail maintenance on these targeted parcels. In addition, a watershed-wide invasive weed effort has been occurring in the Middle Fork basin, carried out by a number of groups and public agencies (Mountains to Sound Greenway, King County, WADNR, the Native Plant Society and MidFORC). Hundreds of miles of roads, trails, and riverbanks have been surveyed and weed control has occurred on hundreds of acres, acquisition of these properties would ensure that effort could be continued in this key area.

E. Is the property identified in an adopted park, open space, comprehensive, or community plan?

Both the **2012 King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP)**, as amended, and the **2010 King County Open Space Plan** contain policies that direct acquisition, planning, and stewardship of KC Parks. The acquisition of these parcels is consistent with these policies as follows:

The **Open Space Plan** policies direct Parks to:

- focus regional open space efforts on the natural watershed systems and regional systems such as the wildlife habitat network and Mountains to Sound Greenway
- conserve lands that accommodates backcountry trails/adds to a backcountry trail network
- acquire lands that provide connectivity with existing county ownership and provide multiple benefits/functions
- assist with conservation of forest land and facilitate those lands as viable working resource lands

The **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Chapter (Ch. 6) of the KCCP** states:

- Open space sites should be acquired when identified in the King County Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan...to protect contiguous tracts of working resource lands or ecological resources. (Policy P-117)
- Forest land owned by King County shall provide large tracts of forested property. . . that protect areas from development or provide a buffer between commercial forestland and adjacent residential development. (Policy P-114).
- KC Parks should facilitate educational and interpretive programs that further the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and recreational resources (Policy P-107)
- Important natural habitat and biological diversity should be protected, preserved and enhanced (P-109)

The **Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area Site Management Plan (1999)** recommends:

- acquiring properties that buffer the natural area, provide connection between natural area and other resource lands and preserve habitat corridors within the area.

F. Transferable Development Credits (TDC) participation

The County's TDR Program staff confirmed that the target properties qualify as TDR sending sites and also assisted with developing the estimate of purchase price for the properties' development rights. However, at this time the target parcels are not ranked as high priorities for TDR bank acquisition.

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?

The target properties are located next to an existing King County Natural Area managed and monitored by King County Parks. Proximity to existing park sites and facilities creates efficiencies in management. Site stewardship would be funded by the Parks Levy (which includes accelerator for new acquisitions). In addition, as previously described above, WADNR would own and manage the land. Several user groups would likely be interested/willing to support and assist with site monitoring, and restoration, invasive control and trail projects through volunteer events.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

1) TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT^a	CFT: \$175,000
2) TOTAL PEL APPLICATION AMOUNT^b	PEL: \$175,000

^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).

PROJECT COSTS	ESTIMATED DOLLAR AMOUNT OR RANGE
Total property interest value* (<i>DR purchase only</i>)	\$580,000
Title and appraisal work (<i>shared with WADNR, TPL</i>)	\$ 10,000
Closing, fees, taxes (<i>shared with WADNR</i>)	\$ 5,000
Relocation	N/A
Hazardous waste reports	N/A
Directly related staff, administration and legal costs	\$ 5,000
Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)	\$600,000

* based on estimates provided by the King County TDR Program Manager and TPL

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)
<i>WADNR will use USFWS Section 6 Endangered Species Conservation Funds for fee title (land)</i>	Funds in hand, but expire w/in a year	TBD based on remaining balance in grant fund
Total CFT Funds Previously Received This Project	2013 CFT	\$125,000
Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds Currently Identified	2013 CFT	\$125,000 CFT \$125,000 Parks Levy
Unidentified Remaining Match Need	N/A	WADNR will need to secure funds for underlying fee @ \$200,000 (if Section 6 funds not sufficient)

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.

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)
WADNR will contribute funds for fee acquisition of land after DRs are removed	TBD based on number of parcels acquired	WADNR has Section 6 funds in hand	Grant expires within one year
WADNR will contribute funds for fee acquisition of land after DRs are removed	TBD based on number of parcels acquired	Applying for WA ST RCO WWRP grant	Application due 5/2014 Funds Awarded 6/2015
TPL may help fund title work and appraisals/handling negotiations	@\$10,000	Underway/ongoing	2014
TOTAL	TBD		

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 1/2 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:



Middle Fork Snoqualmie NRCA/NA Potential Addition Site Map

- Potential Acquisition
- Publicly Owned Lands
- King County Parcels
- Streams and Rivers

King County
 Department of
 Natural Resources and Parks
 Parks Division
 March 12, 2014



Middle Fork Snoqualmie NRCA

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