



**King County**

K.C. Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2015 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS  
APPLICATION FOR FUNDS**

**PROJECT NAME:** Mitchell Hill Forest additions

**Applicant Jurisdiction(s):** King County DNRP, Parks and Recreation Division

**Open Space System:**

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

This proposed acquisition would be additions to King County's 2,000- acre Duthie Hill-Grand Ridge-Mitchell Hill-Preston Ridge corridor. These park lands are identified in the 2010 King County Open Space Plan as being within the **Snoqualmie/Skykomish and Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Systems**, as well as the Wildlife Habitat and Regional Trail Functional Systems. These parcels also lie within the Mountains to Sound Greenway.

**Acquisition Project Size:** 146 acres (23 parcels)

*(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)*

Priority Target Parcels: 1924079091, 2124079015, and 2124079003

Other project parcels: 1924079065, 1924079002, 1924079001, 1924079038, 2024079057, 2024079021, 2024079050, 2024079049, 1724079011, 1724079033, 1724079032, 2024079070, 2024079007, 2024079069, 2024079010, 2024079068, 2024079011, 2024079025, 2024079067, 2924079053,

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

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Seattle, WA 98104 Date March 13, 2014

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

*(In the space below, provide a brief, but comprehensive description of the project including goals and significance of this project)*

This acquisition proposal would acquire the last inholding at Mitchell Hill Forest, and begin a multi-year effort to connect over 2,000 acres of King County open space park lands with over 2,000 acres of Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WADNR) forest lands. These lands are located north of Preston and I-90 in rural King County (see maps) within both the Snoqualmie/Skykomish and Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Systems. King County ownership would eliminate a Mitchell Hill "inholding" allowing more efficient management of county lands, restrict future additional residential development, ensuring retention of forestland, and give additional protection to a designated wildlife habitat network. Establishing connectivity between thousands of acres of county and state lands provides significant conservation of forest land, protection of terrestrial and aquatic habitat, and opportunities for miles of new passive recreation trails for hiking, mountain biking, running and horseback riding.

## 1. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Please review the attached evaluation criteria. For the **proposed acquisition parcel(s)**, please (1) mark only those criteria that apply, and (2) thoroughly, yet succinctly describe **in the space below** how the proposed acquisition satisfies each marked criteria.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. Community separator                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs   |

### A. Wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve

Grand Ridge Park and the Mitchell Hill Forest contain Wildlife Habitat Network corridors as designated in the King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP). Wildlife habitat networks are made of natural vegetation linking priority wildlife habitat with critical areas, their buffers, trails and parks/open space. KCCP Policies E-107 and -483 require the designation and mapping of habitat networks for threatened, endangered, and priority species and direct that connections within the network corridor be protected to alleviate the effects of habitat fragmentation and be managed to help enhance priority wildlife habitat within them. These targeted parcels provides buffer to the mandated 300 foot wide habitat corridor.

The wildlife inhabiting this site is typical of west side mature second growth forest habitats and thus includes a variety of migratory and resident birds (approximately 80 species), 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 E487).

### B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources

The proposed additions are located within the Patterson Creek and Raging River basins of the Snoqualmie Watershed, and the Issaquah Creek basin within the Cedar River-Lake Washington Watershed. The Snoqualmie watershed supports wild runs of coho, chinook, pink, and chum and steelhead salmon. The 2005 Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan( WRIA 7) lists acquisition of land and retention of forest cover as recommended actions to protect and restore salmon runs and responds to recent listings of Puget Sound Chinook salmon and bull trout as threatened under ESA. In 2007 Coho salmon were designated as a species of concern.

The Issaquah Creek Basin within the Cedar Sammamish Watershed is one of the three most significant basins in urbanizing King County; portions have been identified as a Regionally Significant Resource Area because of its exceptional fisheries habitat and undeveloped character. Eight species of salmonids (six anadromous) are known to utilize the Issaquah Basin. Both the Issaquah Creek Basin and Nonpoint Action Plan recommend concerted actions to protect the areas that remain intact and productive and restore degraded areas to maintain salmon populations.

### C. Scenic resources

The Preston Ridge/Mitchell Hill/Grand Ridge/Duthie Hill Park corridor is an integral part of the mission of the Mountains to Sound Greenway (MTSG). Acquisition of these parcels would be consistent with MTSG's goal of protecting open space lands along a 100-mile corridor of Interstate 90 from Seattle to Central Washington in order to enhance scenic beauty, conserve wildlife habitat and provide for recreational opportunities. In addition, limited views of the surrounding landscape (Cascade Mts. and foothills, Issaquah Alps and adjacent valley) can be seen from many points of the project area.

### D. Community separator

The Preston Ridge/Mitchell Hill/Grand Ridge/Duthie Hill Park Corridor along with the WADNR public lands in the project area provide a visual and functional separation between Issaquah, Sammamish, Fall City, and Preston, lands within rural King County and along the I-90 corridor.

### G. Park/open space or natural corridor addition

As stated earlier, the project parcels lie within the 2000-acre Preston Ridge/Mitchell Hill/Grand Ridge/Duthie Hill Park corridor and connect with over 2,000 acres of WADNR forest lands.

### H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs

These acquisitions would allow an opportunity for siting trails between/within the King County park lands and increasing future trail connectivity to other adjacent WADNR public lands. Also allows for future trailhead development near Preston. Also, facilitating connectivity and expanding the backcountry trail system are listed as acquisition criteria in the 2010 Parks Open Space Plan, and policy goals in the King County Comprehensive Plan.

## 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

### A. Educational/interpretive opportunity

Trail and trailhead development would facilitate opportunities for various interpretive facilities including signage, kiosks and self- guided interpretive trail loops that could teach visitors about the area's natural resources. Educational opportunities could be provided by hosting volunteer events for trail construction and maintenance (including decommissioning of inappropriate trails) as well as for invasive removal and restoration plantings.

### B. Threat of loss of open space resources

If not preserved as public open space, the KC Roads parcels would be sold and converted to private ownership. If these forested properties are not acquired, the properties could be developed 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 area. Acquisition of the Mitchell Hill "inholding" would minimize ownership fragmentation and allow more efficient management of county lands, restrict future additional residential development, ensuring retention of forestland, and give additional protection to a designated wildlife habitat network.

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

The owners of both target properties have recently confirmed their continued and very high interest in selling to KC Parks. The Mitchell Hill inholding property owner has expressed a willingness to keep the property off the market in order to allow the county to purchase it. KC Roads is anxious to surplus the two parcels and is most willing to transfer ownership to KC Parks in lieu of a public auction process.

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

This long term acquisition project was developed in collaboration with WADNR and MTSG in order to preserve open space and create recreation opportunities in the Preston area.

In addition, KC Parks partners with various trail groups - the Washington Trails Association, Backcountry Horsemen, Evergreen Mt. Bike Alliance, Sammamish Saddle Club, KC Executive Horse Council, Issaquah Alps Trails Club- to plan, design and maintain prospective backcountry recreational trails on sites within the project area. All of these trail groups support open space preservation and expansion of the public trail network in rural King County.

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

Both the **King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP)** and the **2010 King County Open Space Plan** contain policies that direct acquisition, planning, and stewardship of public open space lands:

- 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,
- Focus regional open space efforts on the natural watershed systems and regional systems such as the wildlife habitat network and Mountains to Sound Greenway,
- Acquire lands that provide land and trail connectivity, eliminate inholdings, and implement WRIA plans,
- Assist with conservation of forest land and facilitate those lands as viable working resource lands,
- Emphasize acquisition and development of sites that provide for multiple benefits and functions.
- Protect contiguous tracts of working resource lands or ecological resources, and King County managed forest land shall provide large tracts of forested property...that will remain in active forestry, protect areas from development or provide a buffer between commercial forestland and adjacent residential development.

In addition, acquisition of lands to connect the Mitchell Hill Forest to Preston Ridge Forest and WADNR lands is a recommendation in the Draft Mitchell Forest Plan, and a key recommendation in the recently completed WADNR Concept Snoqualmie Recreation Corridor Plan.

### 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?*

These properties would be additions to existing KC Park sites, thus stewardship would primarily involve the expansion of work already carried out by KC Parks staff funded by the Parks Levy. In addition, several user groups would likely be interested and willing to support and assist with site monitoring, restoration and trail construction/decommissioning projects through volunteer events, and via the Adopt a Park and Park Ambassador Programs. Groups that have participated in the types of stewardship activities needed on these sites include the Washington Trails Association, Issaquah Alps Trails Club, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, Mountains to Sound Greenway, Forterra and equestrian groups - Backcountry Horsemen and Sammamish Saddle Club. Lastly, since Mitchell Hill Forest is managed as a working forest, revenue from any forest management activities could be used to steward the site.

### 4. PROJECT BUDGET

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>1) TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT<sup>a</sup></b> | <b>CFT: \$500,000</b> |
| <b>2) TOTAL PEL APPLICATION AMOUNT<sup>b</sup></b> | <b>PEL: \$500,000</b> |

<sup>a</sup>*Allowable 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.*

<sup>b</sup>*King 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).*

King County Roads would like to surplus parcels 9003 and 9015 and has determined a combined value of \$569,000 for both parcels. The inholding target parcel, 9091, has a tax assessment value of \$373,000. All other project parcel values are based upon the property tax assessment. Additional percentage was added to the request to cover acquisition costs, see below.

| <b>PROJECT COSTS</b>                                   | <b>ESTIMATED DOLLAR AMOUNT OR RANGE</b> |
|--|---|
| Total property interest value                          | <b>\$6,500,000</b>                      |
| Title and appraisal work                               | <b>\$150,000</b>                        |
| Closing, fees, taxes                                   | <b>\$50,000</b>                         |
| Relocation   | <b>NA</b>                               |
| Hazardous waste reports                                | <b>\$25,000</b>                         |
| Directly related staff, administration and legal costs | <b>\$25,000</b>                         |
| <b>Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)</b>       | <b>\$6,700,000</b>                      |

| <b>MATCHING FUNDS: Existing Sources</b><br>(CFT can only provide a maximum of 50% of anticipated project costs) | <b>DATE</b><br>(Expended or Committed) | <b>DOLLAR AMOUNT</b><br>(Expended or Committed) |
|---|--|---|
| Park Expansion Levy (PEL)   | Current Application                    | \$500,000                                       |
| <b>Total CFT Funds Previously Received</b><br><i>This Project</i>   | 2011/2012<br>(Expended)                | \$100,000/\$300,000<br>(Expended)               |
| <b>Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds</b><br><i>Currently Identified</i>                                   | 2014 (Committed)                       | \$16,800<br>(Committed)                         |
| <b>Unidentified Remaining Match Need</b>  | Current Application                    | \$483,200                                       |

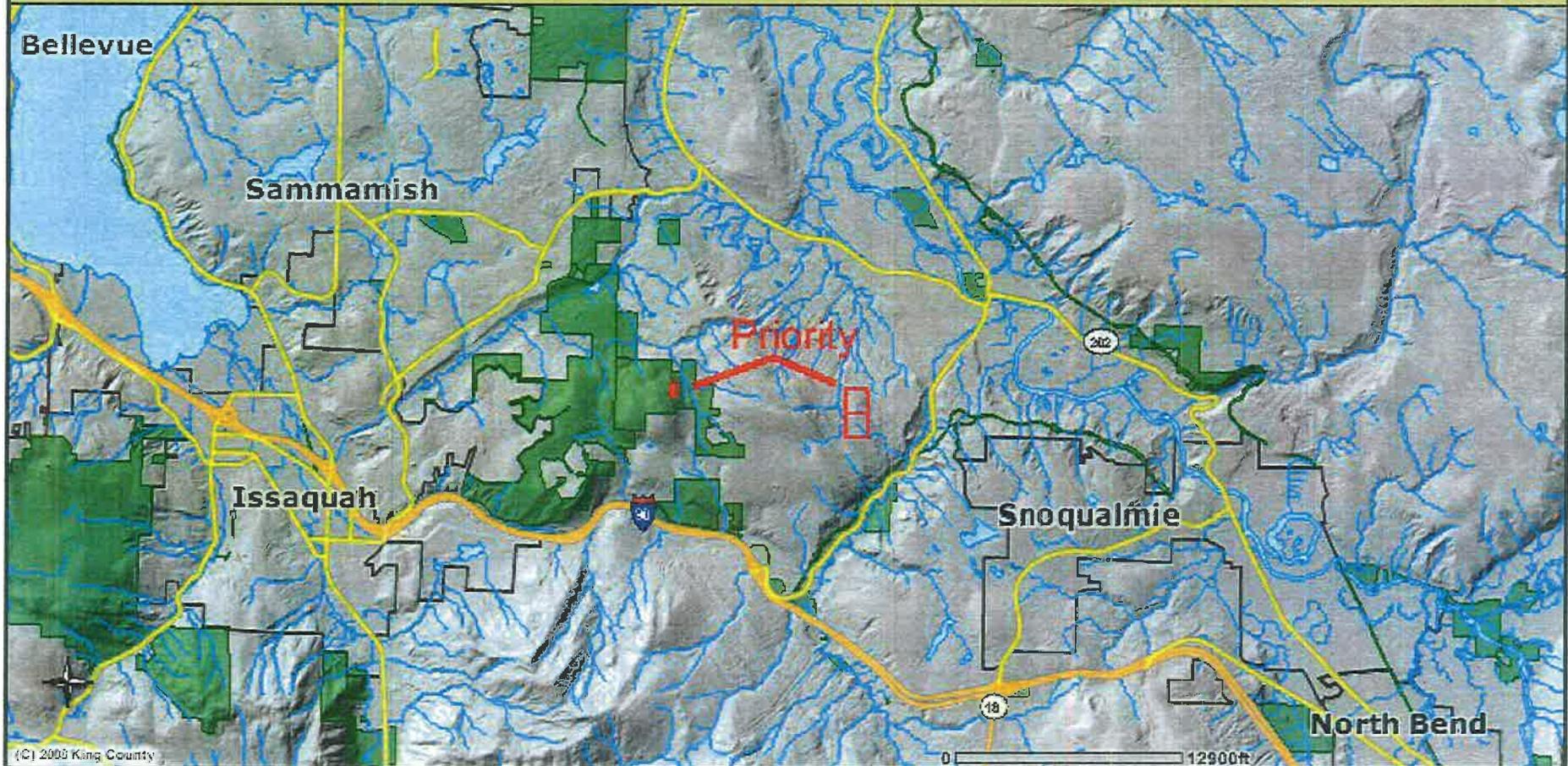
**Unidentified remaining match need: What funds are anticipated and what is the time frame?**  
*Please briefly discuss how the unidentified remaining match need above will be met.*

NA

## 5. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

| <b>Brief Activity Description</b> | <b>Dollar Value of In-kind Contribution</b> | <b>Status</b><br>(Completed or Proposed) | <b>Activity Date Range</b><br>(Completion Date or Proposed Completion Date) |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| NA                                |   |  |   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      |   |  |   |

# Mitchell Hill Vicinity- Priority Parcels



(C) 2008 King County

0 12900ft

- |                 |                        |                  |                   |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| County Boundary | Lakes and Large Rivers | City             | Other Government  |
| Highways        | Streams                | State            | Incorporated Area |
| Streets         | Parks                  | Federal          | Shaded Relief     |
| Highway         | King County Parks      | Park District    |                   |
| Arterials       | County                 | Special District |                   |
|                 | (cont)                 | (cont)           |                   |

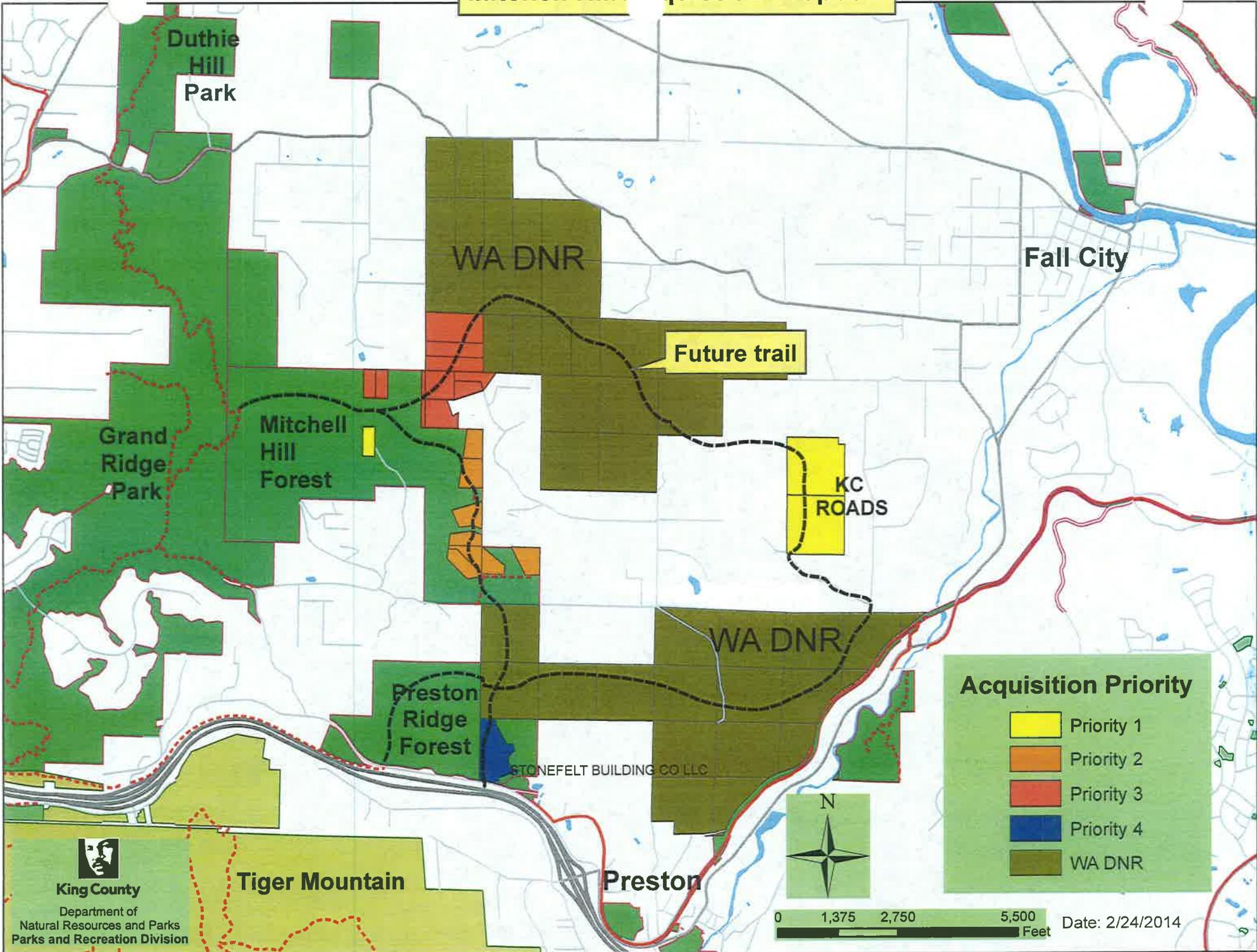
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Date: 3/12/2014

Source: King County iMAP - King County Parks (<http://www.metrokc.gov/GIS/iMAP>)



# Mitchell Hill Acquisition Proposal



Fall City

Future trail

KC ROADS

WA DNR

WA DNR

Duthie Hill Park

Grand Ridge Park

Mitchell Hill Forest

Preston Ridge Forest

Tiger Mountain

Preston

STONEFELT BUILDING CO LLC

**Acquisition Priority**

- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3
- Priority 4
- WA DNR



0 1,375 2,750 5,500 Feet

Date: 2/24/2014

King County  
Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks  
Parks and Recreation Division

WA DNR

9003

KC ROADS

9015

SE 58TH ST

SE 54TH ST

325TH PL SE

324TH PL SE

329TH AVE SE

PRESTON-FALL CITY RD SE

322ND AVE SE

SE 62ND WAY

SE 60TH ST

SE 64TH ST

308TH PL SE

WA DNR

0 600 1,200 2,400 Feet



King County

Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks  
Parks and Recreation Division