



**King County**

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

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

**PROJECT NAME: South Fork Skykomish Corridor Conservation**

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): King County DNRP

Open Space System: Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

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

Acquisition Project Size: 101 acres (5 parcels)

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

CFT Application Amount: \$50,000

*(Dollar amount of CFT grant requested)*

Parks Levy: \$50,000

Primary Target Parcels: 312612-9026, 302612-9031, 302612-9029, 122610-9008 & 1226109010

Type of Acquisition(s):  Fee Title  Conservation Easement  Other: Pre-acquisition work

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Seattle, WA 98104

Date: 3-13-14

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The goal of this project is to conduct pre-acquisition work on several parcels along a 12-mile corridor of the South Fork Skykomish River with conservation and recreation value. Several high priority conservation parcels were identified in the King County’s South Fork Skykomish River Basin Restoration Feasibility Report (2013). King County Parks will explore parcels with recreation opportunities in the corridor, as they do not currently own property in the watershed. The first priority target parcels at the South Fork Skykomish-Tye-Foss River confluence include 75.2 acres of undeveloped high quality salmon habitat at river mile 19.5 of the South Fork Skykomish River. The other priority target parcels are 26 acres along the South Fork Skykomish, just upstream from the community of Baring. A limited number of second priority parcels will be investigated as well. This proposal will fund landowner outreach and pre-acquisition work including title, timber valuation and appraisal.

The South Fork Skykomish River supports Chinook, coho, steelhead, and is critical habitat for bull trout. Though much of the watershed is protected in federal ownership (over 80% in Forest Service ownership and 43% designated as Wilderness), the river corridors contain a significant number of unprotected parcels. These parcels contain high quality river habitat but are zoned for rural residential development. King County, in partnership with Forterra and the Forest Service, plan to protect key salmon habitat along the South Fork Skykomish and its tributary rivers. King County residents heavily use the corridor’s recreational areas so Parks will explore expansion of these opportunities including river access points, trails, and natural areas. Conservation of these lands is consistent with the objectives and vision outlined in the “Skykomish Valley Economic Development, Recreation and Natural Resource Conservation Initiative” introduced to the King County Council via Motion 2014-0102 on March 10, 2014.

## 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

A. Wildlife habitat: The South Fork Skykomish River is surrounded by the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Some of the forest is managed for active forestry and recreation but 43% is designated as Wilderness Areas. The river provides habitat and migration corridors for a variety of mammals including black bear, coyote, cougar, foxes and long-tailed weasels. The confluences with the Foss, Tye, and Miller Rivers provide excellent habitat for fish eating raptors including osprey and bald eagle. The intact riparian vegetation and natural river processes also provide ideal habitat for songbirds, waterfowl and amphibians.

B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources: The South Fork Skykomish River is home to Chinook salmon, steelhead and bull trout, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The US Fish and Wildlife Service have designated the South Fork as critical foraging, migration and overwintering habitat for bull trout populations. It is estimated that up to 25% of the entire Skykomish River Chinook population comes from the South Fork. The 2005 Snohomish River Basin (WRIA 7) Salmon Conservation Plan identifies the South Fork Skykomish River as a “mainstem – primary restoration” sub-basin. These lands are some of the highest priority salmon habitat actions identified in King County’s Restoration Feasibility Report (2013). The priority parcels include 1.3 miles of South Fork Skykomish river shoreline and 300 feet of Tye River shoreline including high quality unarmored river shoreline habitat and intact riparian habitat. Most of the parcels are covered by mature native vegetation and contain no structures. The Baring priority parcels are undeveloped and lie between State Route 2 and the South Fork Skykomish River.

C. Scenic resources: The priority parcels provide scenic views of the South Fork Skykomish, Tye and Foss Rivers and associated floodplains. As King County’s Foss River Road passes close to the river there are opportunities to view a natural floodplain and dynamic river. The corridor target parcels provide views of Mt Index, Mt. Baring and several other Cascade Mountain peaks. They include natural river frontage of mature forest and a healthy riparian zone; steep gradient, rocky river (on the Foss parcels) adjacent to the Foss River Road, and a broad main stem river (on the Baring parcels) adjacent to the state highway. State Route 2 is a national Scenic Byway, and the properties are within the Stevens Pass Greenway. Many recreationists pass these properties on the way to hiking, camping and other activities. These river reaches are also used by kayakers, and provide a natural scenic appearance for those boaters.

E. Historic/cultural resources: The properties are within the historic Skykomish valley, which has a rich history associated with the Great Northern Railway, completed across Stevens Pass in 1893. State Route 2 (adjacent to both target areas), completed in 1925, has been an avenue for transporting timber products as well as recreational users. Federal forest conservation management began in the valley in 1907, when President Theodore Roosevelt set aside these lands as National Forest. Logging occurred on private lands beginning in the early 20th century, originally by rail, and later by road. One of the priority parcels has a view of the Foss River Bridge, which is a designated King County Landmark. Some of the second priority parcels are along the Old Cascade Highway, which is a designated King County Heritage Corridor.

F. Urban passive-use natural area/greenbelt: The South Fork, Tye and Foss confluence parcels contribute to the surrounding undeveloped natural areas captured in the National Forest. They provide river access just two miles from the Town of Skykomish and less than half a mile from the unincorporated Timberlane Village. The other priority parcels provide a natural area adjacent to the community of Baring.

G. Park/open space or natural corridor addition: Over 80% of the South Fork Skykomish Watershed is protected in Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. The first priority and second priority parcels will provide a critical link between currently federally protected upland and unprotected riparian and riverine habitats. These areas will provide contiguity of habitat and floodplain processes that will benefit multiple species while providing connected open space areas for the surrounding community.

H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs: Land acquired in the future will be designated as a natural area and will allow passive recreation and river access. The property along the Foss River Road currently is an informal river access point for kayaking, boating, wildlife viewing, and fishing. The Baring property has public access potential for fishing, picnicking and kayaking. Though King County does not have a formal plan for recreational development along the Foss River Road properties, King County Parks is working with American Whitewater to learn more about the recreational needs of the kayakers and boaters that commonly use the reach. King County will explore other recreational opportunities on first and second priority parcels while collaborating with the Forest Service, Forterra, the Town of Skykomish and recreation groups to coordinate any expansion of recreational amenities or access.

## 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: The priority parcels are in close proximity to the town of Skykomish and the communities of Baring and Timberlane Village. The corridor is along State Route 2 and is a popular tourist byway heading up to Stevens Pass. The parcels provide educational and interpretive opportunities for the surrounding communities to learn about the importance of floodplain processes for the recovery of salmonids, as well as the role of the nearby Great Northern Railway in the development of the valley. King County will work with the newly founded Skykomish Environmental Institute and other educational groups to coordinate Skykomish education efforts and potential interpretive signage on future acquisition parcels.

B. Threat of loss of open space resources: A small portion of forest along the Foss River Road was recently cleared and it is unclear if the landowner was simply logging the site or considering future development. The most significant urgency to these parcels is losing the site's ecological value to future logging activity as the landowner is the forestry company Weyerhaeuser. The Longview Timber company logged another similar riverfront parcel on the South Fork in the past three years.

C. Ownership complexity/willing seller/ownership interest: Forterra has engaged in preliminary discussions with Weyerhaeuser regarding selling three of the priority parcels and several other parcels in the watershed. They have expressed a willingness to consider an offer to purchase the properties identified in this proposal, consistent with their business objectives. Baring Timber LLC, the owner of the Baring area parcels has expressed its willingness to consider an acquisition offer. King County plans to begin discussions with these landowners in 2014 so appraisal funding available in 2015 could lead to acquisitions in 2016. Both Weyerhaeuser and other private landowners own the second priority parcels.

D. Partnerships: In 2013, King County, the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum and the US Forest Service collaborated to complete the Restoration Feasibility Report, which identified several restoration and protection priorities in the watershed. King County is currently working with Forterra, the Forest Service, the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum and the Town of Skykomish to develop a conservation and recreation vision for the watershed. Protection efforts on the South Fork will support Snohomish County's floodplain restoration projects downstream along the Braided Reach of the Skykomish River. King County Noxious weeds have been controlling invasive knotweed along the river since 2005 which has improved riparian habitat.

E. Is the property identified in an adopted park, open space, comprehensive or community plan: The project is listed in the Snohomish Basin (WRIA 7) Three Year Work Plan which is the current capital project list of the Snohomish Basin River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan. The project is listed in the 2013 Three Year Work Plan as project #07-HSR-019 and is also listed in King County's Restoration Feasibility Report. Some of the corridor's parcels are in South Fork river reaches that were identified by the county's Waterways 2000 conservation effort.

The target parcels are consistent with the 2010 King County Open Space Plan's acquisition criteria which call for the acquisition of parcels that: provide multiple functions (such as habitat protection, passive recreation, scenic corridors); help buffer urban/rural areas; provide regional recreation for areas where such opportunities are not currently available or underserved in the existing system; and conservation actions which serve to implement the WRIA plan's conservation goals.

### 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?*

Properties acquired in the future through this effort will become part of the King County Parks Division inventory. Parks will follow standard protocols to inventory, steward and maintain the properties. As Parks does not currently own property in the watershed, they will explore cost effective partnerships to enhance the long-term maintenance of acquired properties. Parks will collaborate with the Water and Land Resources Division to identify and implement opportunities for habitat restoration such as noxious weed control and riparian restoration. Volunteer and community stewardship opportunities may be possible on this property where appropriate.

### 4. PROJECT BUDGET

<b>1) TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>CFT: \$50,000</b>
<b>2) TOTAL PEL APPLICATION AMOUNT<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>PEL: \$50,000</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).*

**Property values are estimated by King County property agents based on residential values in the area and mature timber acreage.**

<b>PROJECT COSTS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED DOLLAR AMOUNT OR RANGE</b>
Total property interest value	
Title and appraisal work	<b>\$70,000</b>
Closing, fees, taxes	
Relocation	
Hazardous waste reports	
Directly related staff, administration and legal costs	<b>\$30,000</b>
<b>Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

<b>MATCHING FUNDS: Existing Sources</b> (CFT can only provide a maximum of 50% of anticipated project costs)	<b>DATE</b> (Expended or Committed)	<b>DOLLAR AMOUNT</b> (Expended or Committed)
<b>Total CFT Funds Previously Received</b> <i>This Project</i>		
<b>Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds</b> <i>Currently Identified</i>		
<b>Unidentified Remaining Match Need</b>		

**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.*

N/A

**5. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS**

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

**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)**

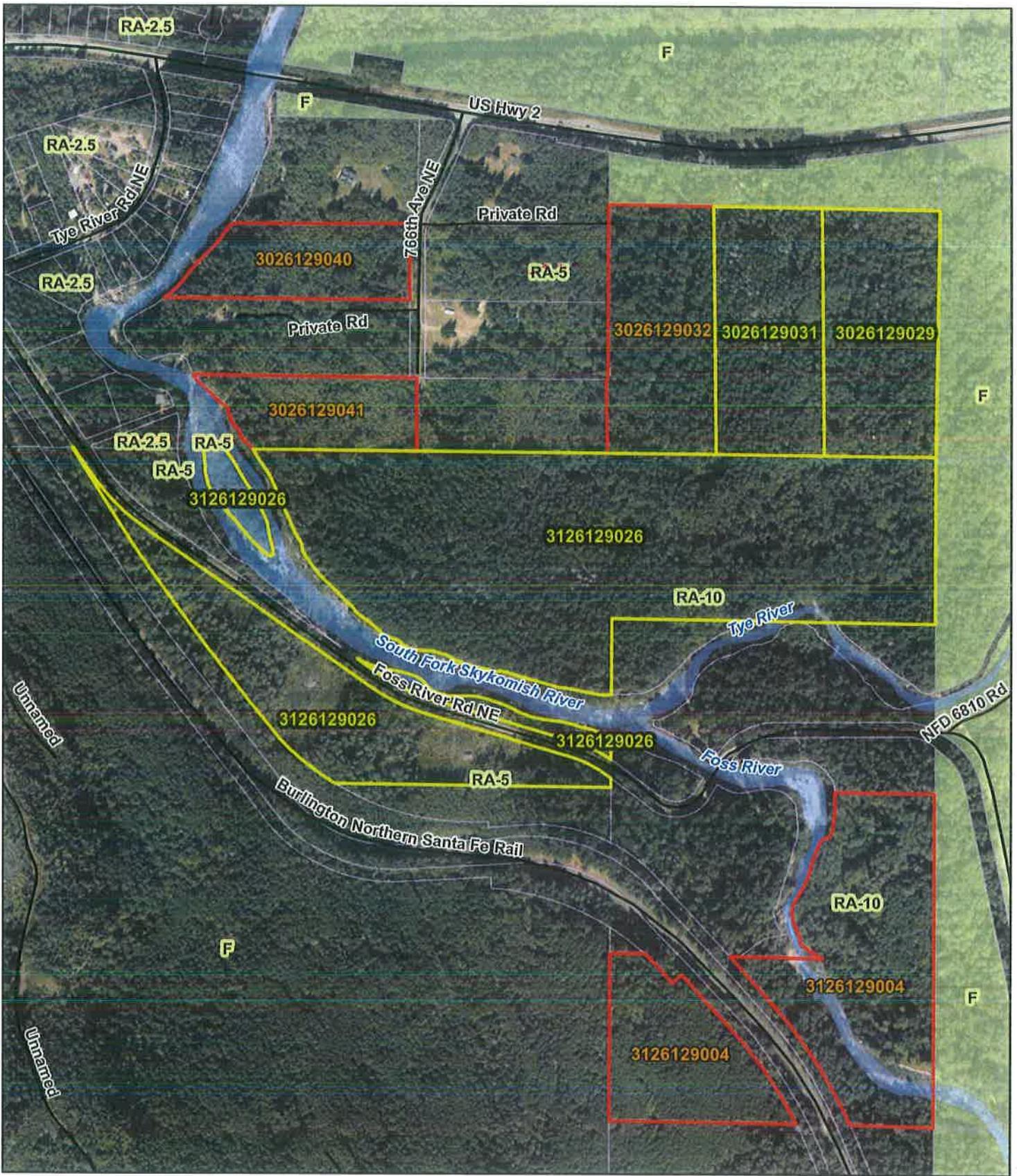
8 ½ x 11” maps are preferred, but 11 x 17” is acceptable if folded and hole-punched for insertion into a three-ring binder.

**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).*



### South Fork Sky-Tye-Foss River Confluence

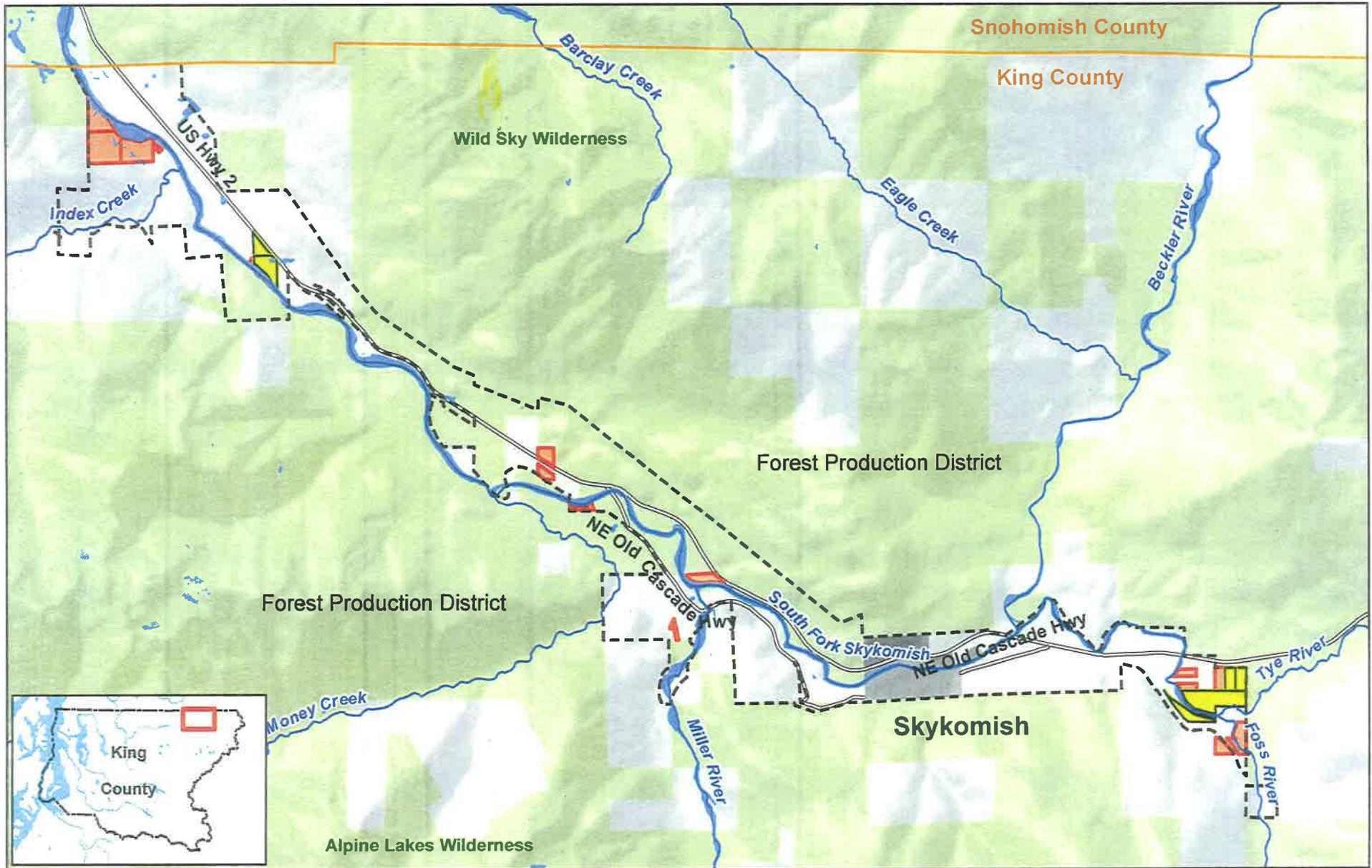
- First Priority
- Second Priority
- Publicly Owned Lands
- Parcels
- Roads
- Photo Year: 2012



**King County**  
 Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
 Water and Land Resources Division

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 Feet

March 6, 2014



## South Fork Skykomish River Corridor Conservation

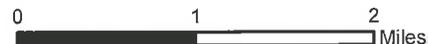
- Priority Acquisition
- Second Priority Acquisition
- Publicly Owned Land
- County Boundary
- Incorporated Area
- Forest Production District
- Major Road

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Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
Water and Land Resources Division

March 12, 2014



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