



King County

**CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2016 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS
APPLICATION FOR FUNDS**

PROJECT NAME: Middle Newaukum/Big Spring Creek and Wetland Preservation

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Open Space System: Big Spring/Newaukum Creek Natural Area
(Name of larger connected system, if any, such as Cedar River Greenway, Mountains to Sound, a Regional Trail, etc.)

Acquisition Project Size: 38 acres **CFT Application Amount:** \$385,000

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Seattle, WA 98102 **Date:** March 18, 2015

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Acquiring land along Middle Newaukum/Big Spring creeks would result in:

- **Preserving Wetlands:** The *Newaukum Creek Characterization Report* (KC 2007) states: “This wetland complex represents one of the most valuable wildlife habitat areas on the (Enumclaw) Plateau because of its relative size, native vegetation present, and presence of forest, wetland, and riparian habitat all in one location.” Acquiring these parcels would expand the effort to preserve one of the largest and most important wetland complexes in King County.
- **Protecting Fish:** Newaukum Creek provides spawning and rearing opportunities for ESA-listed Chinook salmon and steelhead. Other salmon species in this reach are coho (depressed populations in Newaukum), sockeye, chum salmon, and cutthroat trout. Big Spring Creek provides habitat for coho and cutthroat trout.
- **Restoring Habitat:** The parcels identified for acquisition are in significant need of habitat enhancement. Acquisition would facilitate the restoration of degraded stream riparian zones and wetlands. King County is in the process of actively restoring public and private lands along these streams and in this wetland complex, including the Big Spring Cr. Restoration Project and Newaukum Cr. Revegetation Program.
- **Enhancing Water Quality:** In 2011, the Washington Department of Ecology released a Total Maximum Daily Load report documenting high summer water temperatures and fecal coliform in Newaukum Creek, and recommends riparian revegetation to reduce high water temperatures due to a lack of streamside woody vegetation. Acquiring land provides the opportunity to increase shade and reduce water temperature through revegetation.

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: Newaukum Creek is identified in the King County Comprehensive Plan as part of a county-wide wildlife network. Wildlife observed in this area includes elk, river otter, mink, marsh hawks, osprey, red tailed hawks, bald eagles, herons, coyote, deer, ducks and geese (wood ducks), songbirds (western meadowlark), and amphibians (Pacific chorus frogs). Between 400 and 500 acres of wetland are present in the Newaukum Creek basin; historically over 1,200 acres were present. The existing wetlands can be categorized as forested, scrub-shrub, emergent, or open water wetland types. The emergent zone is particularly important for breeding amphibians.

B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources: Newaukum Creek is one of the two largest tributaries to the Green River and provides habitat and migration corridors for two species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act: Chinook salmon and steelhead. Other fish species present are sockeye salmon, coho salmon (listed as depressed for Newaukum Creek in the 1992 SASSI report), chum salmon, and cutthroat trout. Big Spring Creek provides spawning and rearing habitat for coho salmon and cutthroat trout, provides excellent overwintering habitat for steelhead trout, and supplies substantial quantities of cold water (about one-third of the low flow discharge) to Newaukum Creek.

C. Scenic resources: The properties provide views of Newaukum Creek, Mahler Park, Mount Rainier, the Cascade foothills and adjacent farm lands.

D. Community separator: The Newaukum and Big Spring creek confluence area defines the north boundary of Enumclaw's Urban Growth Area (UGA) and has historically served as a buffer to the City's growth. Preserving this area would limit future growth to the north, providing a definitive regional boundary between urban Enumclaw and rural King County.

G. Park/open space, or natural corridor addition: The priority properties are near or adjacent to units of the Big Spring/Newaukum Creek Natural Area, managed by the King County Parks Division as passive open space.

H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs: The priority properties provide linkages along Newaukum and Big Spring creek areas that have been previously protected. Acquisition of properties in these areas offer southeast King County residents access to streams, wetlands, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

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: If acquired, these degraded properties would be extensively restored. Restored lands create opportunities for King County Staff to interact with adjacent landowners increases the potential to work with other community members to protect and enhance their properties.

B. Threat of loss of open space resources: Development of these targeted properties would negatively impact the goal of establishing a robust open space corridor protecting the streams and wetlands associated with Newaukum and Big Spring creeks. Draining the properties would reduce the potential to restore wetland and riparian areas, and reduce the potential for salmon recovery in the Middle Green River Basin.

C. Feasibility: ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/community support: All three parcels have willing sellers; one of the properties is in foreclosure.

D. Partnerships: The City of Enumclaw, which previously purchased property encompassing portions of Big Spring and Newaukum creeks, and who manage Mahler Park, have consistently supported efforts to protect the Newaukum and Big Spring creek corridors. Organizations like the Middle Green River Coalition have also been highly supportive of these acquisition efforts. All landowners are willing to negotiate a sale.

E. Is the property identified in an adopted comprehensive plan, park open space, habitat, cultural resource or community plan?: Support for protecting these lands is found in the *WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan* (WRIA 9 2006). Two specific projects identified in this plan recommend protecting and restoring Newaukum and Big Spring creeks. This section of Newaukum Creek is included within the King County wildlife network (KC Comprehensive Plan 2012). The *Last Best Places in the Middle Green River* (KC 2002) identifies Middle Newaukum Creek/Big Spring Creek as one of eight "Preservation Focus Areas" within the Middle Green River sub-basin.

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?

Agency Participation - The maintenance and stewardship of these parcels will be the responsibility of KC DNRP. Stewardship of these sites will be a partnership between KC staff and community stewardship groups and volunteers. The three natural areas are currently managed exclusively for natural resource protection; the addition of these parcels to the KC natural area system would not change the management objectives of the natural areas or of the acquired parcel. However, the site management plan would be amended to include acquired parcels.

Monitoring and Maintenance - Baseline monitoring will be conducted immediately after property acquisition and include a site inventory. This information will provide a foundation for a site management plan, which will guide long-term monitoring, maintenance, restoration, and overall management. Monitoring and maintenance will be accomplished through volunteer work parties, paid staff, and contract crews. Adaptive management will be implemented to respond to other challenges observed through monitoring.

Signage, Inspection and Enforcement - Like all public land, these parcels have the potential to become illegal dumping areas and may draw partygoers or transients. However, these particular parcels have a fairly low risk of this happening because of distance from urban areas and lack of access. Signage would be placed at the site and regular park inspections would be conducted to discourage misuse. KC staff works closely with the KC Sheriff's Department to ensure enforcement of County Park System Codes.

Volunteers - Volunteers from schools and community groups from Enumclaw and Auburn may be recruited for future restoration efforts.

Trails - KC 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. Trail maintenance would be accomplished by KC staff and volunteers.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT*	\$385,000
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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.

Budget estimates were correlated through market value comparison in KC appraisal files of comparable properties with similar site influences, and would be confirmed by appraisal prior to acquisition.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS (dollars)	
Total property interest value	\$670,000
Title and appraisal work	\$25,000
Closing, fees, taxes	\$25,000
Relocation	
Hazardous waste reports	\$20,000
Directly related staff, administration and legal costs	\$30,000
Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)	\$770,000

MATCHING FUNDS SOURCES	Date Expended or Committed	Match Funds Expended or Committed
2014 Parks Levy – Regional Open Space Acquisition funds		\$385,000
Total Matching Funds (Based on 2-year requirement)		\$385,000
<i>Unidentified Remaining Match Need:</i>		NA

Unidentified remaining match need

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

No additional matching funds are needed if 2014 Parks Levy funds are available.

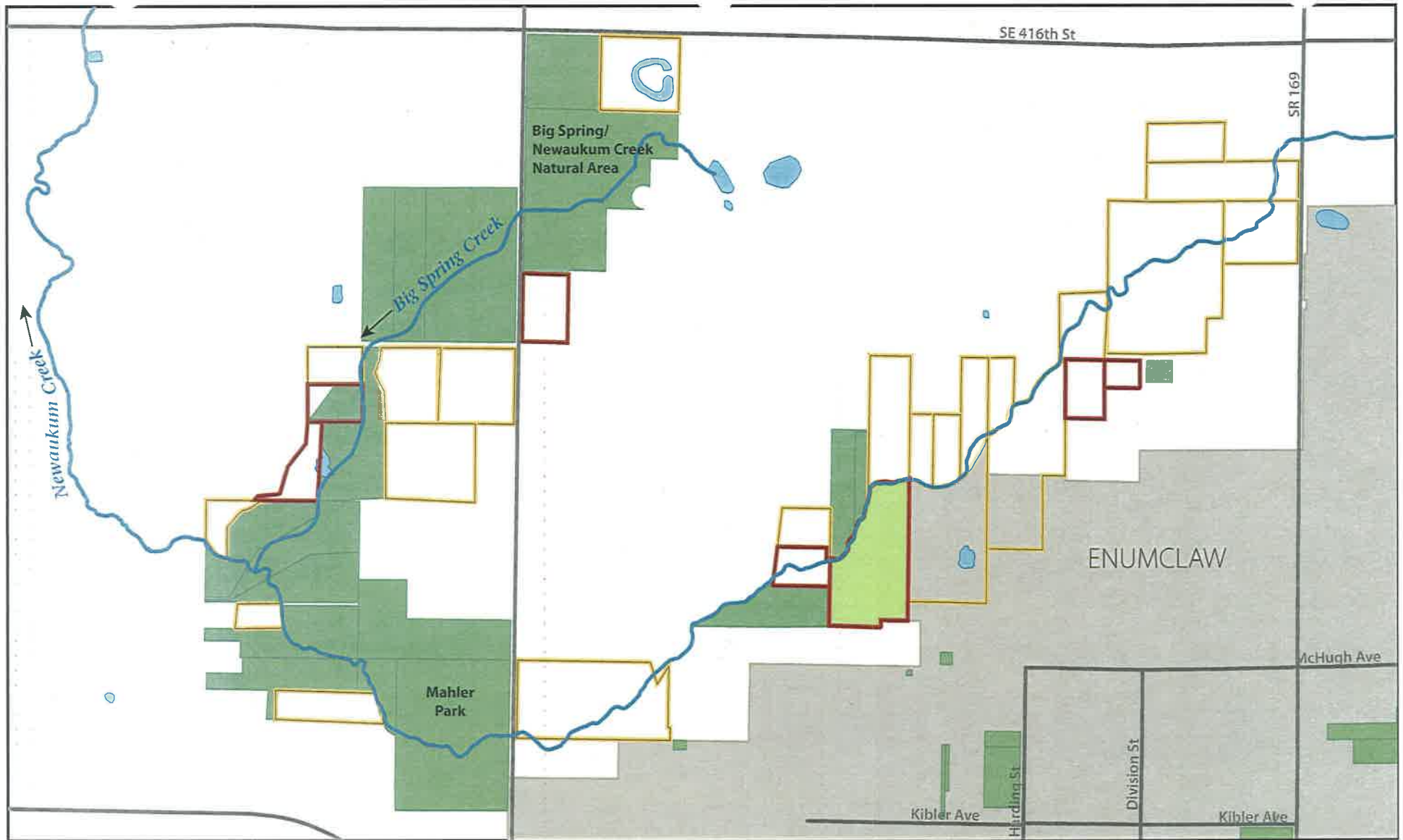
5. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

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	Ongoing
TOTAL	\$5,000		


6. ATTACHED MAP

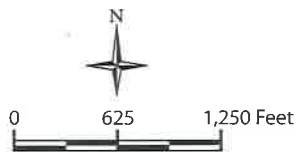
Please attach a one-page, 8 1/2'x 11" site map that shows the following:

- 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).*



Middle Newaukum Creek/Big Spring Creek

-  2015 Priority Acquisition
-  Potential Future Acquisition
-  Acquisition in Negotiations
-  Public Land or Conservation Easement
-  Stream/Creek
-  Road



Department of
Natural Resources and Parks

The information included on this map has been compiled by 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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