



King County

K.C. Date Received _____

CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2016 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS APPLICATION FOR FUNDS

PROJECT NAME: Lower Newaukum Creek Acquisition

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

Open Space System: KC Natural Areas: Lower Newaukum Creek, Middle Green River

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

Acquisition Project Size: 160 acres CFT Application Amount: \$990,000

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

(Dollar Amount of CFT grant requested)

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

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201 S. Jackson, Suite 600, Seattle, WA 98104 Date: March 18, 2015

PROJECT SUMMARY:

CFT funding will protect the following habitat associated with Newaukum Creek and Middle Green River:

- Newaukum Creek Ravine is a core spawning area for Green River fall Chinook salmon and steelhead, both threatened species per the Endangered Species Act. It is one of the largest stream ravines in western Washington (four miles in length by up to one mile in width). The forested ravine could, through future acquisitions, connect to State Park lands (2,500 acres) along the Green River Gorge, and the Green River Natural Area (1,200 acres). Over time, this connected land will become part of one of largest low-elevation old-growth forests in the state.
- Middle Green River contains one of the two most significant Chinook salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing areas in the watershed. A portion of the three parcels along the Green River would be preserved in perpetuity for habitat restoration and protection, and the remainder of the parcels would be protected for agricultural production.

Protecting all target parcels would also benefit wildlife such as the North Rainier Elk Herd (White River Unit) and 10 State Wildlife Species of Concern. These acquisitions would also protect water quality in an area rich in aquatic resources.

1. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Review the attached evaluation criteria. For the proposed acquisition parcel(s), please (1) mark those criteria that apply, and (2) 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 |

Wildlife Habitat/Plants – The Middle Green River (MGR) provides habitat for 10 State Species of Concern: Chinook salmon, steelhead, bald eagle, great blue heron, pileated woodpecker, big brown bat, fisher, mink, Western toad, and Van Dyke’s salamander. Other wildlife in this area include cougar, black bear, bobcat, and red fox. The North Rainier Elk Herd (White River Unit) with 600-900 individuals is one of 10 documented elk herds in state. Birds: turkey vulture, wood duck, western screech-owl, barn owl, great blue heron, goldfinch, blue grouse, and violet green swallows. The varied and merging habitat types (riverine, floodplain, steep slopes, streams, wetlands, ravines, riparian zones, uplands) provide food and cover for a wide variety of wildlife.

Salmon Habitat/Aquatic Resources – Protection and restoration of refuge habitat such as tributaries is a primary goal of the *WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan* (2005) for the MGR sub-basin. The Plan states: “Refugia are areas within a watershed that provide persistent habitat conditions that support the population during environmental perturbations.” The Newaukum Creek parcels protect refuge habitat. Another Plan goal is to protect and restore spawning and rearing habitat in Lower Newaukum Creek, one of the few areas in the watershed that would assist in maintaining spatial structure in salmonid populations because of the diversity of landscapes. The MGR was identified as one of 10 most important river reaches in Puget Sound for salmon recovery (Trust for Public Land 2001). The *WRIA 9 Habitat Limiting Factors Report* (2000) noted that the MGR supports the highest spawning densities in the watershed.

Scenic Resources - These parcels provide outstanding scenic opportunities associated with the lower Newaukum Creek Ravine Green River. Observers can see extensive forests, steep slopes, a spectacular ravine, streams, wetlands, and a beautiful and dynamic floodplain of a major river. Developing these parcels would compromise the scenic value of the existing natural areas.

Community Separator - The project area is within three miles of Auburn, Black Diamond, and Enumclaw, and the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation. If acquired, these parcels would increase the community separator function currently being provided by the natural areas. Preserving these lands would help protect these communities from residential sprawl by increasing the linkage of public land along lower Newaukum Creek the Green River.

Park/Open Space or Natural Corridor Addition - Preserving this reach would complement the protection efforts for the Lower Newaukum Creek Natural Area and the 1,200-acre Green River Natural Area. These natural areas are closely associated with the 2,500-acre Green River Gorge State Park lands. These public lands provide ecological connectivity important for fish and wildlife migration. These protected areas will likely become low-elevation old-growth forests over time.

Passive Recreation Opportunity - Preserving these parcels would enhance the opportunity south-county residents have to hike, fish, and bird-watch in a natural setting. Residents in the fast-growing communities of Enumclaw, Black Diamond, Auburn, and the Enumclaw Plateau would benefit from additional permanently protected passive recreational opportunities along lower Newaukum Creek and the Green River.

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

Educational/interpretive opportunity - Preserving these parcels would provide educational and interpretive opportunities. The properties contain upland, steep slope, and riparian habitat, the benefits of which could be described in educational signage along trails. Reasons why this area is important to fish, wildlife, and water quality could be highlighted with signage. Visitors could also learn about the fish and wildlife habitat restoration projects planned for the three natural areas.

Threat of loss of open space resources - Residential development is permitted in this area. The parcels are accessible by maintained county roads, and water and electricity can be easily accessed. The properties provide beautiful settings for homes (adjacent to natural area, views, etc.). Protection would prevent undesirable management issues associated with residential development (tree clearing, livestock grazing, pets, noise, light, off-road vehicle use, etc.).

Ownership complexity/willing seller/ownership interest - King County DNRP has contacted all of the prioritized parcel owners. All are willing to negotiate an acquisition.

Partnerships - This acquisition effort is supported by the Middle Green River Coalition. The applicant is also partnering with King County staff who lead the Farmland Preservation Program and the Transfer of Development Rights Program to protect the three Green River properties across from Whitney Bridge Park (King County). A portion of these parcels near the river would be preserved in perpetuity for habitat, and the remainder of the parcels would be protected for agricultural production. Two to three development credits would be removed.

Is property identified in adopted park, open space, comprehensive, or community plan? - Support for acquiring land in the areas where the parcels are found is expressed in: *Waterways 2000* (KC 1995), *Last Best Places in the Middle Green River* report (KC 2002), the *WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan* (WRIA 9 2006). Both lower Newaukum Creek and the Middle Green River are designated Wildlife Corridors in the *King County Comprehensive 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?

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*	\$990,000
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**Allowable acquisition costs (Ordinance 13717): 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.*

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	\$1,845,000
Title and appraisal work	\$30,000
Closing, fees, taxes	\$35,000
Relocation	NA
Hazardous waste reports	\$30,000
Directly related staff, administration and legal costs	\$40,000
Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)	\$1,980,000

MATCHING FUNDS SOURCES	Date Expended or Committed	Match Funds Expended or Committed
2014 Parks Levy – Regional Open Space Acquisition funds		\$990,000
Total Matching Funds (Based on 2-year requirement)		\$990,000
<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.

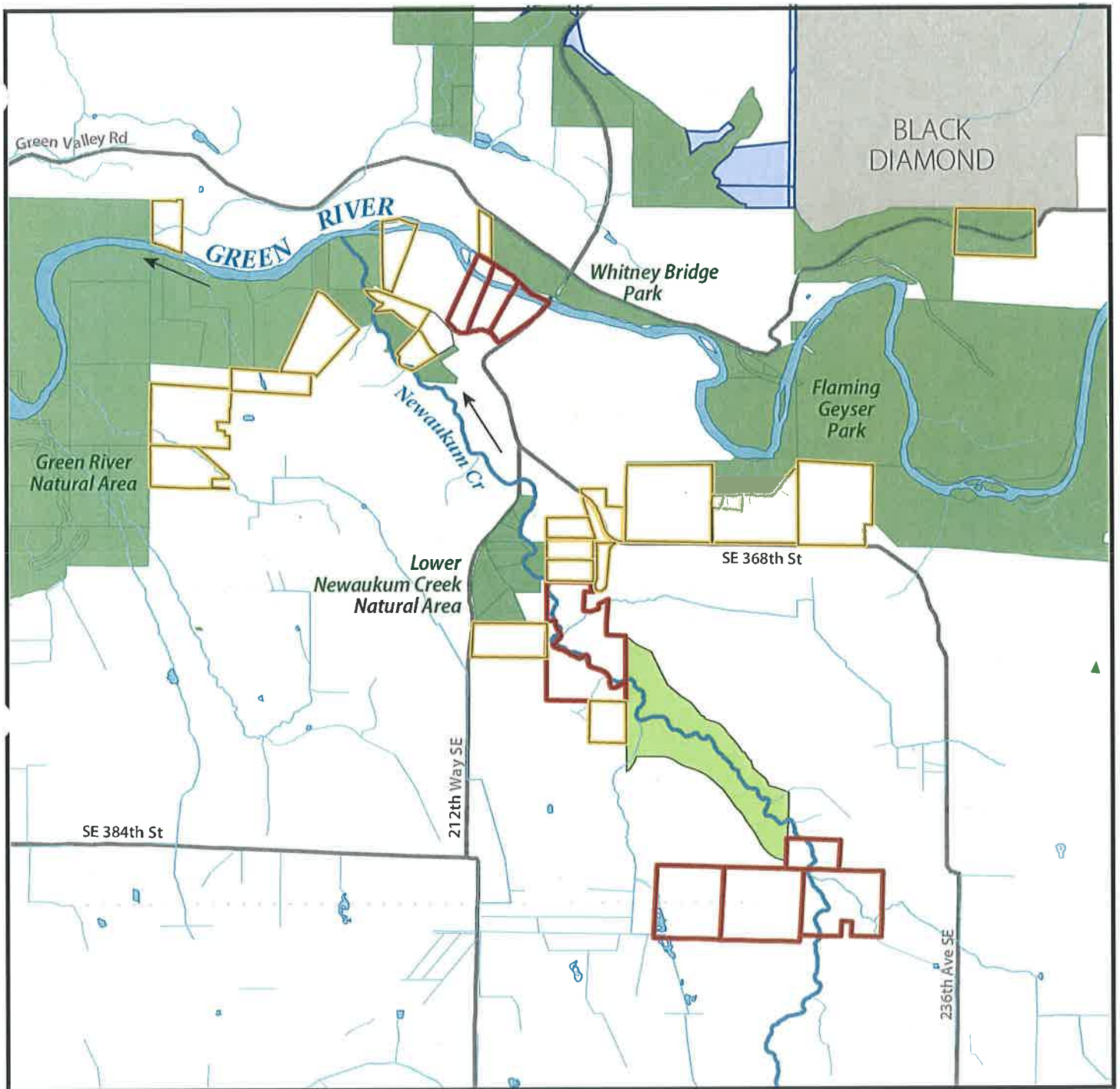
5. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

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

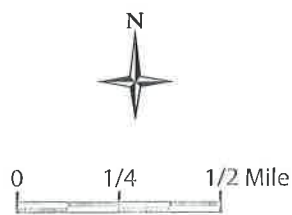
Please attach a *one-page, 8 1/2'x 11" site map* that shows the following:

- 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).*



Lower Newaukum Creek Preservation

- 2015 Priority Acquisition
- Potential Future Acquisition
- Acquisition in Negotiations
- Conservation Easement
- Public Land



King County

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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Data: projects\wlr\12007, 12008, and 13005