CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2016 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS
APPLICATION FOR FUNDS

PROJECT NAME: Soos Creek Park and Trail Additions

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): King County

Open Space System: Soos Creek Park & Trail
(Name of larger connected system, if any, such as Cedar River Greenway, Mountains to Sound, a Regional Trail, etc.)

Acquisition Project Size: ~43 acres
(type in acres and proposed number of parcel(s) if a multi-parcel proposal)

CFT Application Amount: $275,000
(Dollar amount of CFT grant requested)

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

CONTACT INFORMATION
Contact Name: Ingrid Lundin
Title: Natural Lands Planner
Address: 201 S. Jackson Street, Suite 700
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: 206-477-4578
Fax: 206-263-6217
Email: Ingrid.Lundin@kingcounty.gov
Date: March 2015

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.)

The 775-acre Soos Creek Park and Trail lies within a stream, wetland, and floodplain corridor nearly 10 miles long. The park contains a ~7.5 mile-long paved multiuse regional trail that extends from the City of Renton to the Cities of Kent/Covington. There are two aspects of this proposal, listed here in priority order.

(1) Southward Habitat Corridor Extension: This request builds on our 2013 acquisition feasibility grant & 2015 grant award supporting southward extension of the Soos Creek habitat protection corridor between Kent & Covington, and into rural King County. Due to environmental and right-of-way constraints, Soos Creek Trail extension will occur primarily on road right-of-way south of SR 516 at this time; this grant scope focuses primarily on habitat protection.

This is Phase 2 of a 2-year ask targeting 3/5 mile of Soos Creek corridor and associated Category 1 wetland, through the purchase of ~65 acres located on the southern boundary of Covington. We purchased the ~21-acre "Berrydale Tree Farm" in January 2015 using awarded 2015 funds. This year’s target are the undeveloped ~43+ acres immediately north owned by Cascade Water Alliance; broader scope includes a few other parcels along the corridor and the Kent School District property to the south.

(2) Covington Highlands Trail Parcel: There is a 6.13-acre parcel included in past scopes. Seeking trail easement acquisition in support of the Covington Highlands Trail, part of planned east-west trail linking Soos Creek Trail with Green to Cedar Rivers Trail. A 2013 feasibility study recommended acquiring right-of-way on this parcel to prevent wetland impacts on a Puget Sound Energy parcel directly to the north that was originally planned for trail route.
I. 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.

☑ 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 or rare plant reserve

Despite being surrounded by a high degree of development, Soos Creek Park & Trail provides valuable wildlife habitat. The park is located within a Wildlife Habitat Network Corridor as designated in the King County Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan). Larger mammals known to use this area include black bear, cougar, bobcat, red foxes and coyotes. Approximately 120 bird species have been reported in Soos Creek Park. Even though they are not all seen annually, it is significant that about half of King County’s entire bird assemblage may be found in the park. The park is known to support a number of Species of Local Importance designated in the Comp Plan (Policy E-487), State candidate species, and two sensitive species for which the King County CAO requires protection of breeding sites (the red-tailed hawk and the great blue heron). Ecological survey work indicated that the park contains 113 taxa of vascular plants, though the survey revealed no endangered or rare plants.

B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources:

These southward corridor parcels contain the southernmost large wetland in the Soos Creek Corridor, a 62-acre Category 1 wetland. The property is located within the documented Chinook spawning reaches (lower 6 miles) of Soos Creek through SR 18 (and presumed use north of there). Coho and chum were historically present in Soos Creek all the way to the headwaters. Soos Creek is known to also support winter steelhead, resident cutthroat trout, western pearlshell mussel, and fresh water eels. This reach of Soos Creek is an isolated pocket that was rated as “high” for ecological process function under the Shoreline Master Program.

D. Community separator

The 750-acre Soos Creek Regional Park provides a visual and functional separation between rural King County and urban areas of unincorporated King County and the cities of Renton, Kent, and Covington. This acquisition work would support future acquisitions to add to that separator in Kent/Covington area. The Comp Plan specifically supports establishment of permanent urban separators and links with city greenbelts (Policies U-180, U-182). The 2010 King County Park Plan includes the protection of lands that buffer the urban growth line as a high priority acquisition criterion (App. VII).

F. Urban passive-use natural area/greenbelt

Acquisitions stemming from this work would contribute to passive-use urban separator/greenbelt functions, provide a buffer from nearby urban development, facilitate additional protection of natural features and environmentally sensitive areas as well as add land to a regional park.

G. Park/open space or natural corridor addition

In addition to the community separator and urban functions noted in “D” & “F,” acquisitions in the southward corridor extension would contribute to the regional functions of the Soos Creek Park and Trail. The King County Comp Plan (Park Chapter) calls for King County to focus on linking natural areas to create regional open space corridors of greenways. The county’s 2010 Park Plan directs a focus on regional trails and passive parks.

The Covington Highlands trail parcel would contribute to the planned corridor development, which is a long-term proposal anticipated for additional work in the next 10+ years, likely in partnership with Covington.

H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs

The southward corridor acquisition would primarily be used for passive recreation such as walking and habitat observation, possibly horseback riding. Covington Highlands acquisition is anticipated to support regional trail.
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 Friends of Soos Creek Park, in coordination with King County and the City of Kent, lead numerous educational and interpretive programs in the Soos Creek Park. These include bird, plant, butterfly, and bat walks. Many students from the Kent School District participate in these educational and interpretive programs.

B. Threat of loss of open space resources
The Soos Creek Corridor through Kent & Covington will only continue to become more developed over time. Soos Creek is a valuable wetland system for both hydrologic and habitat functions. As growth in this area continues and as other patches of habitat in the region are lost, protecting the corridor will become more important for fish and wildlife.

C. Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed
For southward corridor: Cascade Water Alliance is a willing seller, and we have been in discussions for more than a year. We are in the process of appraising the target parcel, and this spring we will issue an offer that is contingent upon receiving funding. They will be surplusing the developed portion of the parcel (~6 acres). We will perform an exempt lot segregation to attach our purchased land to our Berrydale Tree Farm parcel.

For Covington Highlands Trail: The prior landowner just sold it to his son, who may develop a home on the site - but is still willing to sell us a trail easement.

D. Partnerships - Describe any public or private partnerships that will enhance this project
The Friends of Soos Creek Park (FOSCP) and the South County Chapter of the Sierra Club are strong supporters who have advocated for ongoing acquisitions in this area. Both groups have assisted King County with park planning, stewardship and environmental educational activities through ongoing participation and sponsorship of volunteer activities. FOSCP has over 10 years of history serving as an official Adopt A Park group for Soos Creek Park; several of its members are active Park Ambassadors; and they seek monetary donations, all of which are used to steward the regional park and area resources. Additional site partners supportive of our acquisition and restoration efforts are Middle Green River Coalition, and Rainier Audubon Society.

E. Is the property identified in an adopted park, open space, comprehensive or community plan?
Both the Comp Plan and the Park Plan contain policies that direct acquisition, planning, and stewardship of KC Parks. The acquisition of these parcels is consistent with the following policy direction:

- 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.” (Park Plan Policy G-101)
- Emphasize acquisition and development of sites that provide for multiple benefits (Park Plan Policy CIP-120)
- Preserve lands that serve as an urban separator (Comp Plan Policy U-182); lie within a designated Wildlife Habitat Network and contain wetlands and aquatic areas and their buffers, and Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (Comp Plan Policy E-107) and/or provide habitat for species of local importance (Comp Plan Policy E-487)

The 2013 Lower Soos Creek Basin Ecological Assessment identified acquisition/protection between stream miles 5-6 as a high priority to preserve habitat connectivity, a reach which includes the Berrydale Tree Farm and Cascade Water parcels. It strongly recommends preserving the remaining wetlands in the lower Soos Creek 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?

King County Parks’ maintenance work would be funded with Parks Levy operating funds (funded 2014-2019 due to recent vote in August 2013).

Typical King County maintenance includes regular site inspections to identify and address any issues arising on site in regard to public health and safety, property encroachments, natural resource damage, infrastructure damage, trail condition, etc. If a parking area is developed on site, then inspections and maintenance are much higher in frequency to ensure appropriate use of the parking area.

We assess forest health at all King County Parks sites. It is possible that this is a site on which forest stewardship activities may occur if recommended by such an assessment.

Depending on opportunity and site plans, there may be capital or operating work on site which is eligible for specific trail or restoration grants, or for recreational amenity development with local stakeholder groups through Parks’ Community Grants Program, or for restoration work through the volunteer program.

King County anticipates partnership with local stakeholder groups such as Friends of Soos Creek Park, Rainier Audubon, and South County chapter of the Sierra Club.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

1) TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT\(^a\)

2) TOTAL PEL APPLICATION AMOUNT\(^b\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CFT: $275,000</th>
<th>PEL: $275,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\(^a\)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.

\(^b\)King County projects only, if applicable.

Estimation of property value:
Briefly note how land value has been estimated (i.e., appraisal, property tax assessment, asking price, letter of value or other means).

Estimate of Value:
I will provide a more detailed breakdown of budget and request during our April field trip. We have an appraisal underway the CWA property due in late March. No appraisal on the trail-related easement for Covington Highlands Trail. Assessed value is under $200,000, but estimating cost at $50,000 at the high end.

Rescope Request
I request that the committee rescope the following three Soos Creek budgets to include these 2016 targets as priorities.

- **1114770 Parks Levy – Soos Creek Regional Park.**
  - This includes 2014 award for Calhoun Pit + 2015 award for Phase 1 Berrydale Tree Farm.
  - Current balance $106K:
    - $90-95K is encumbered for Calhoun Pit (funds still needed, King County Roads is working to clear up a problem with property title).
    - Remaining up to $16K may be used for this project.

- **1116955 Parks Levy – Soos Creek Acquisition Feasibility**
  - This 2013 award included these 2016 targets in general scope.
  - This money has funded all acquisition work (except purchase) on the two phased acquisition described herein (landowner discussions, appraisals, title, etc.).

4 of 5
Current balance ~$5K which may be used for this project.

**1116245 CFT – Soos Cr Add.**
- This includes 2013 award for Acquisition Feasibility award + 2014 award for Calhoun Pit.
- As noted above, this Acquisition Feasibility money has funded all acquisition work (except purchase) on the two phased acquisition described herein (landowner discussions, appraisals, title, etc.).
- Current balance ~$104K:
  - $90-95K is encumbered for Calhoun Pit, funds still needed.
  - Remaining up to $14K may be used for this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT COSTS</th>
<th>ESTIMATED DOLLAR AMOUNT OR RANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total property interest value</td>
<td>$550,000 (southward corridor) + $50,000 (Trail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title and appraisal work</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing, fees, taxes</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocation</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous waste reports</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly related staff, administration and legal costs</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)</strong></td>
<td>$600,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATCHING FUNDS: Existing Sources</th>
<th>DATE (Expended or Committed)</th>
<th>DOLLAR AMOUNT (Expended or Committed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1116955 Parks Levy – Soos Creek Acquisition Feasibility</strong></td>
<td>Jan 2013</td>
<td>~$5,000 available (match)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1114770 Parks Levy – Soos Creek Regional Park contains 2014 Calhoun Pit &amp; 2015 Berrydale Tree Farm funds.</strong></td>
<td>Jan 2014 &amp; Jan 2015</td>
<td>~$16,000 available (match)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total CFT Funds Previously Received This Project</strong></td>
<td>Jan 2013</td>
<td>~$14,000 available (CFT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1116245 CFT – Soos Cr Add. Included Acquisition Feasibility (as well as Calhoun Pit in 2014)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds Currently Identified</strong></td>
<td>Up to $35K may be available from the projects listed above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unidentified Remaining Match Need</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

We are seeking $275,000 in 2015 Parks Levy funds as match for the CFT funding.

5. **IN–KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief Activity Description</th>
<th>Dollar Value of In-kind Contribution</th>
<th>Status (Completed or Proposed)</th>
<th>Activity Date Range (Completion Date or Proposed Completion Date)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).
Soos Creek Park Additions 2016 CFT-PL Application

Vicinity Map

- Priority Parcel
- Parcels In Scope
- Paved Trail
- Soft Surface Trail
- City Parks
- King County Parks
- Publicly Owned Lands
- Incorporated City
- Streams and Rivers
- Urban Growth Boundary

King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Parks and Recreation Division
3/12/2015

The information included on this map has been compiled by King County 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 fitness for the use of such information. This document is not intended to be a survey product. King County shall not be liable for any general, special, indirect, or consequential damages including, but not limited to, loss revenues or lost profits resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained on the map. Any use of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.
Soos Creek Park Addition – Priority Parcel #1 Cascade Water Alliance
Aerial view of subject property looking south from SR 18
Priority Parcel #2 – Additional Detail

Covington Highlands Trail Proposed Route – Western Segment
(from Green to Cedar Rivers Trail Feasibility Study, November 2012)

Acquiring an easement on this target parcel (Scott) will allow regional trail to avoid wetlands rather than require boardwalk construction as shown above in feasibility study.