

Office of the Executive

Aaron Reardon

County Executive

425-388-3460

FAX 425-388-3434

County Council

Dave Somers

Council Chair

Dave Gossett

John Koster

Brian Sullivan

Stephanie Wright

425-388-3494

FAX 425-388-3496

June 1, 2011

County Approves Conservation Futures Acquisitions

Land to be preserved for habitat and recreational purposes

On Tuesday, the Snohomish County Council, with support from the County Executive, took action to approve the allocation of more than \$3.1 million from the county's Conservation Futures fund to assist with the purchase of more than 3,000 acres of land throughout the county to be used for a variety of open space and recreational uses.

Funding is available from a property tax assessment, and state law requires that it be dedicated "to acquire interests or rights in real property for the preservation of open space land, farm and agricultural land and timber land."

This year the county received 10 applications from cities, groups and individuals proposing projects to be funded with Conservation Futures revenues. The list was reviewed by the Conservation Futures Advisory Board, which recommended seven projects to the Council for full or partial funding. Projects on the approved list included \$500,000 to assist the City of Mukilteo in its efforts to acquire 98 acres of property in Japanese Gulch for trails, habitat for salmon and wildlife and water quality protection for Puget Sound; \$25,000 to help the City of Granite Falls in purchasing 23 acres that the city envisions using for hiking trails, ball fields or an outdoor amphitheater; \$225,000

requested by the Echo Paradise Community to purchase 30 acres of land at Quinn's Crossing to preserve a sole source aquifer that serves 15,000 water users and to protect the headwaters of Bear Creek, a critical salmon habitat area; and \$1,383,400 to partner with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources to secure 2,885 acres of forest land that will provide new recreation opportunities for the residents of Snohomish County.

"We are excited to support these great projects across the county that will help to protect critical natural resources while providing recreational opportunities for our residents," said Council Chair Dave Somers. "Our economic stability and growth depends on our ability to provide an environment where companies and individuals want to live, work and play."

The Conservation Futures property tax is estimated to generate \$3.2 million in revenue through the end of 2012. Matching funds for these and other projects will come from local jurisdictions, the State of Washington, and contributions from private donors.

"The protection of these properties as open space and for recreational use is of huge benefit to the residents of Snohomish County," said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. "Not only will they support our nationally recognized parks system, they'll also protect sensitive habitat for fish and wildlife."

"These projects will go a long way toward securing a special quality of life for current and future residents of Snohomish County," noted Council Vice Chair Brian Sullivan. "The projects approved will help us compete for jobs, residents and visitors in this challenging economy."

A full list of the projects to be funded may be found on the Council's website at: http://www.co.snohomish.wa.us/documents/Departments/Council/News/ApprovedProjects_2011.pdf

###

CONTACTS:

Dave Somers 425-388-3494
Dave.Somers@snoco.org

Brian Sullivan 425-388-3494
Brian.Sullivan@snoco.org

Christopher Schwarzen 425-388-3883
Christoper.Schwarzen@snoco.org
