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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
Community Forest Program
Olympia, WA

Via: Whatcom Land Trust

April 28, 2026

Dear Grant Committee,

The Whatcom County Council is pleased to express our strong support for the Whatcom Land Trust's Community Forest Program application for the acquisition of 758 acres of upland forest as part of Phase Three of the Stewart Mountain Community Expansion project.

The effort to establish a robust community forest at Stewart Mountain is an ongoing partnership between the Evergreen Land Trust Association, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, Whatcom County, Whatcom Land Trust, and Western Washington University. This project fits into Whatcom County's resource lands goals to actively discourage forest conversion by supporting forest management strategies that balance forest restoration, maintain a productive timber economy, and strengthen climate resilience.

Since 2022, the Stewart Mountain Community Forest partnership has purchased 2,166 acres of forest to protect water resources and biodiversity while also promoting improved forest management practices. This project is intended to manage Stewart Mountain as a working forest that balances a variety of ecological, economic, and community benefits, such as watershed health, improved water quality, increased water quantity, sustainable forestry jobs, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreational access.

In addition to environmental conservation, the acquired forest lands will also provide benefits for community members. Public access opportunities are intended to prioritize cultural access for local Tribes, passive recreation and non-motorized trails, and opportunities for collaboration on education and research partnerships with community organizations across the county.

Whatcom Land Trust's grant application has our full support and we believe the acquisition will provide lasting value to Whatcom County and beyond.

Sincerely,

Kaylee Galloway, Chair
Whatcom County Council