

**WHATCOM COUNTY  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**Elizabeth Kosa  
Director**



**NATURAL RESOURCES**

322 N. Commercial, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Telephone: (360) 778-6230  
FAX: (360) 778-6231  
[www.whatcomcounty.us](http://www.whatcomcounty.us)

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Honorable Satpal Singh Sidhu, County Executive  
Whatcom County Council

**THROUGH:** Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Director *LBF*

**FROM:** Gary Stoyka, Natural Resources Manager *GS*  
Chris Elder, Senior Watershed Management Planner *CE*

**DATE:** November 18, 2024

**RE:** Grant Agreement with WA Recreation and Conservation Office

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**Requested Action**

Public Works respectfully requests that the County Executive and County Council enter into an agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office to reimburse expenses associated with recent County watershed projects as described below.

**Background and Purpose**

Whatcom County applied to the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Fund for the South Fork Nooksack River Integrated Floodplain Reconnection Project. This project included 2 distinct acquisitions – the Stewart Mountain Community Forest Phase I and the Acme Floodplain. Project partners include the Whatcom Land Trust and Nooksack Indian Tribe. These acquisitions included approximately 670 acres of floodplain, riparian forest, and steep slopes along 4 miles of South Fork Nooksack River shoreline. This project provided a unique opportunity to integrate forest management with adjacent floodplain ecosystems and ensure fully connected ecosystem and watershed function.

Stewart Mountain Community Forest – Phase 1 was acquired by Whatcom Land Trust in October 2022 and Whatcom County contributed \$1.5 million to this acquisition. Acme Floodplain was acquired by Whatcom County in June 2023 and Whatcom County expended \$1,550,000 for this acquisition. These acquisitions will achieve and support numerous objectives to enhance salmon habitat, enhance water supply, reduce water temperature, improve wildfire resilience, maintain forest product harvest, enhance carbon storage, and reduce flood impacts to the town of Acme. These acquisitions will facilitate removal of 2 homes located in the floodway, removal of ~2,300 feet of rip rap ensuring reconnection of more than 100 acres floodplain, support complete implementation of the South Fork Nooksack River Fish Camp (Ts'eq) Integrated Flood and Fish Project, and support public access.

Whatcom County received notification of our award under the 2022 Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration grant program. This agreement provides reimbursement funds for the County's contributions to Stewart Mountain Community Forest – Phase 1 and Acme Floodplain. Funds will be deposited back into the Conservation Futures Fund.

**Funding Amount and Source**

The total grant award is for \$3,565,402, with \$2,900,000 being reimbursed to Whatcom County and the remainder funds reimbursing Whatcom Land Trust for their expenses related to the described acquisitions.

Please contact Chris Elder at extension 6225, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the terms of this agreement.

Encl.  
Grant Agreement