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TO: Washington State Public Land Counties

FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director
Stevens County Commissioner Wes McCart, WIR 2nd Vice President

SUBJECT: National Center for Public Lands Counties

Assessment

Attached for consideration is your County's invoice to support the National Center for Public Lands Counties. This is a one-time assessment. It may be paid in full, or paid in two installments (2023/2024 or 2024/2025). If you intend to pay in two installments, please advise us accordingly. Your Assessment is calculated based on one percent of your allocation of Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Funds. In addition to your counties invoice, a complete listing of all assessments is attached.

This is a voluntary assessment. Our hope is to have 100% participation of all Public Land Counties in Washington State. If you would like a presentation to your county legislative authority, have questions on The Center itself, or the attached invoice, please do not hesitate to contact either Commissioner McCart or Eric Johnson.

Monday, April 3rd WSAC Virtual Assembly

Please join us for the Monday, April 3rd WSAC Virtual Assembly. Stevens County Commissioner Wes McCart will be joined by Eric Bryson, Executive Director of the Montana Association of Counties, to discuss the purpose of the proposed National Center for Public Land Counties. This is an excellent opportunity to get all your questions answered as you consider participation and funding The Center. Zoom link to join this meeting: <https://wsac-org.zoom.us/j/96091320845>

Public Lands in Washington State Background

Over 43%, or 19.8 million acres, of lands in Washington State are publicly owned. The number of acres and land in public ownership varies widely per county - ranging from Whitman County with approximately 5% public land ownership to Skamania County with more than 86% public land ownership. Of the 19.8 million acres in public ownership, 12.7 million, or 64 percent, are owned by the federal government In Washington State.

Federal and State Lands are important economic generators for a number of natural resource base industries, provide outdoor recreation opportunities, support cultural values, and provide a variety of environmental benefits.

Public Lands in Washington State are also important Federal and State revenue sources for counties -- with more than \$110 million annually in revenue to counties.

• Secure Rural Schools (Federal)	26 of 29 Counties	\$18.2 million (FFY2021)
• Payment in Lieu of Taxes (Federal)	37 of 39 Counties	\$26.3 million (FFY2022)
• Dept of Energy Payment (Federal)	3 of 39 Counties	\$1.78 million (FFY2020)
• Refuge Revenue Sharing (Federal)	25 of 39 Counties	\$490,000 (FFY2021)
• WDFW PILT (State)	14 of 39 Counties	\$2 million (FY2021)
• DNR PILT (State)	30 of 39 Counties	\$1.87 million (FY2021)
• DNR Timber	19 of 39 Counties	\$64.5 million (FY Average)
• Local and Tribal Consistency Fund	38 of 39 Counties	\$63.5 million (FFY 2022/2023)

Proposed National Center for Public Lands Counties

In October 2022, the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Western Interstate Region (WIR) Board of Directors proposed the creation of a National Center for Public Lands Counties (The Center) to look towards the future of these unique and important lands, opportunities and investments.

As many of you know, our county elected and appointed officials are a leading voice in the intergovernmental partnership in responsible resource management. Understanding counties unique governance role and relationship to Public Lands, Congress has consistently supported appropriations for critical programs like Payments In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS).

Congress has granted new authorities to federal land managers to broaden the scope, pace and scale of their on-the-ground resource management work with local governments. We have a unique opportunity to accelerate our understanding and demonstrate the results achieved through this partnership. It is important that we provide and share evidence-based research, peer information exchanges, and overall understanding of our lessons learned, emerging trends analysis, and priority public policy issues.

The NACo and WIR Boards of Directors is establishing the National Center for Public Lands Counties (The Center) to give public lands counties an enhanced opportunity to demonstrate how prosperous public lands counties create a prosperous America. The Center will identify and complete research projects, collect and create data and information, and at times provide detailed, individual research and written county profiles focused on the benefit, opportunities, and impact of Public Lands in our counties. The Center will use both traditional and new media—such as podcasts and video interviews—to tell stories and disseminate information. The Center will look at:

- County partnerships with federal agencies, states, tribes and other counties to reduce wildfire risk, responsibly develop energy and minerals, improve public access and recreational opportunities on federal lands, protect watersheds, conserve species and fish and wildlife habitat, and protect our national parks and other natural treasures;
- County investments of PILT, SRS and other natural resource revenue payments to benefit residents, visitors and surrounding public lands;
- The different economic drivers and values in rural vs. urban public lands counties;

- Development and implementation of county natural resource management plans and baseline socioeconomic data for environmental analyses;
- Resource and property values of federal lands compared to nearby privately owned lands;
- Meeting the unique challenges facing public lands counties, such as housing affordability for residents and federal employees, ensuring a stable tax base to deliver critical services, managing infrastructure on federal lands, and providing services to visitors coming to visit public lands and on the public lands themselves.

For the Center to meet its mission and serve as a long-term tool for public lands counties, a one time voluntary investment of \$15 million from counties throughout the nation is being sought over the next two years. These resources will provide the necessary ongoing funding for staff and consultants to plan, initiate, and complete critical research, projects, activities, communication materials and an annual work plan and place The Center on a sustainable future financial course. The Center will report to the NACo and WIR Board of Directors on its financial health and issue an annual report at the annual WIR Conference on both the work product, return on investment, and financial position of the Center.

The Center's governing body is currently envisioned as follows:

- WIR Executive Committee (President, 1st VP, 2nd VP, Immediate Past President)
- NACo Public Lands Steering Committee Chair
- NACo Public Lands Steering Committee Subcommittee Chairs
- Federal Lands Gateway County Official appointed by the NACo Public Lands Steering Committee Chair
- NACo West Region Representative
- NACo Executive Director
- Executive Director from WIR Immediate Past President's home state
- NACo Public Lands Legislative Director and WIR Liaison, serving as NACo staff liaison to the governing board

The Center's governing board will be empowered to develop an annual workplan based on the research priorities selected by the WIR Board of Directors and NACo Public Lands Steering Committee. At the WIR Annual Conference each May, the WIR Board of Directors and the NACo Public Lands Steering Committee will review the activities and performance of the Center, and consider and adopt the proposed workplan for the next year.

In order to leverage the expertise of NACo's public lands membership, the governing board will also have the ability to appoint research subcommittees made up of county officials, based on the research priorities selected by the WIR Board of Directors and NACo Public Lands Steering Committee, to coordinate and oversee the research efforts of The Center. Research work conducted by The Center will be non-partisan, aligned with NACo policy and priorities and will not directly conflict with the interests of any county.

Discussion

Washington's 39 Counties have a unique opportunity to invest in the Center. WIR Board of Directors, NACo leadership, state associations of counties executives and county officials set a fundraising goal of \$15 million over the next two years to establish a set of funds to draw from to hire the necessary staff to conduct this critical research and keep The Center on a sustainable

financial course. Washington's counties are being asked to provide \$635,000 in funding – a one time assessment. If NACo and the WIR Board of Directors are successful, this initial investment will pay dividends for generations to come.

Moving Forward – Immediate Ask

The goal for WSAC over the next two years, is to generate \$635,000 to support the creation and future operations of the Center. Attached is your invoice to support the National Center for Public Land Counties Membership Assessments. Counties that receives PILT and Secure Rural Schools, and/or refuge revenue sharing (38 of 39 counties). Your individual counties assessment is equivalent to one percent of your allocation of Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Funds (see attached).

WSAC and our WIR and Public Lands leaders will continue to provide information to our county elected and appointed officials on how to participate as well as work with WSAC leadership and member counties to better understand the role WSAC can play in funding and supporting the development of the National Center for Public Lands Counties.

If you have any questions, you are encouraged to reach out to either WSAC Executive Director Eric Johnson and/or WIR 2nd Vice President Stevens County Commissioner Wes McCart. Either can be available to answer questions, attend work sessions, and provide additional information.

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National Center for Public Land Counties

Washington State Per County Membership Assessment
Based on 1% of Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Funds (LATCF) Received

Recipient Name	FY22 LATCF Allocation	FY23 LATCF Allocation	Total	1% Assessment
Adams	\$92,193.89	\$92,193.89	\$184,387.78	\$1,843
Asotin	\$171,672.78	\$171,672.78	\$343,345.56	\$3,433
Benton	\$105,151.74	\$105,151.74	\$210,303.48	\$2,103
Chelan	\$3,567,874.70	\$3,567,874.70	\$7,135,749.40	\$71,357
Clallam	\$1,255,382.62	\$1,255,382.62	\$2,510,765.24	\$25,107
Clark	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$1,000
Columbia	\$393,306.04	\$393,306.04	\$786,612.08	\$7,866
Cowlitz	\$101,230.55	\$101,230.55	\$202,461.10	\$2,024
Douglas	\$141,970.80	\$141,970.80	\$283,941.60	\$2,839
Ferry	\$2,181,900.00	\$2,181,900.00	\$4,363,800.00	\$43,638
Franklin	\$153,893.31	\$153,893.31	\$307,786.62	\$3,077
Garfield	\$243,777.61	\$243,777.61	\$487,555.22	\$4,875
Grant	\$923,224.67	\$923,224.67	\$1,846,449.34	\$18,464
Grays Harbor	\$470,064.70	\$470,064.70	\$940,129.40	\$9,401
Island	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$1,000
Jefferson	\$1,692,385.26	\$1,692,385.26	\$3,384,770.52	\$33,847
King	\$286,534.63	\$286,534.63	\$573,069.26	\$5,730
Kittitas	\$1,223,789.54	\$1,223,789.54	\$2,447,579.08	\$24,475
Klickitat	\$172,981.59	\$172,981.59	\$345,963.18	\$3,459
Lewis	\$1,517,241.04	\$1,517,241.04	\$3,034,482.08	\$30,344
Lincoln	\$144,905.94	\$144,905.94	\$289,811.88	\$2,898

Mason	\$397,884.65	\$397,884.65	\$795,769.30	\$7,957
Okanogan	\$6,000,000.00	\$6,000,000.00	\$12,000,000.00	\$120,000
Pacific	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$1,000
Pend Oreille	\$2,071,121.58	\$2,071,121.58	\$4,142,243.16	\$41,422
Pierce	\$541,889.51	\$541,889.51	\$1,083,779.02	\$10,837
San Juan	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$1,000
Skagit	\$856,496.09	\$856,496.09	\$1,712,992.18	\$17,129
Skamania	\$2,021,482.30	\$2,021,482.30	\$4,042,964.60	\$40,429
Snohomish	\$505,038.99	\$505,038.99	\$1,010,077.98	\$10,100
Spokane	\$53,944.88	\$53,944.88	\$107,889.76	\$1,078
Stevens	\$984,174.82	\$984,174.82	\$1,968,349.64	\$19,683
Thurston	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$1,000
Wahkiakum	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$1,000
Walla Walla	\$60,129.90	\$60,129.90	\$120,259.80	\$1,202
Whatcom	\$1,353,433.85	\$1,353,433.85	\$2,706,867.70	\$27,068
Whitman	\$52,115.59	\$52,115.59	\$104,231.18	\$1,042
Yakima	\$1,716,447.05	\$1,716,447.05	\$3,432,899.05	\$34,328
Totals	\$31,753,640.62	\$31,753,645.57	\$63,507,286.19	\$635,055.00