

**WHATCOM COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**Elizabeth Kosa
Director**



NATURAL RESOURCES

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Satpal Singh Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive, and The Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council

THROUGH: Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Director *ek*

FROM: Gary Stoyka, Natural Resources Manager *gsto*

DATE: January 12, 2026

RE: Agreement with Whatcom Land Trust for Acquisition of Phase 1 of the Stewart Mountain Community Forest

Please find attached for your review a copy of an agreement between Whatcom County and the Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) to provide pass-through grant funding from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to the WLT for the purchase of Phase 1 of the Stewart Mountain Community Forest. The authorized agreement will be signed electronically through DocuSign.

Requested Action

Public Works respectfully requests that the County Council authorize the County Executive to sign this agreement.

Background and Purpose

In 2022, WLT purchased Phase 1 of the Stewart Mountain Community Forest (SMCF) consisting of 550-acres of forested land located on the west side of the South Fork of the Nooksack River near Acme. This property was acquired to protect and enhance salmon habitat, enhance water supply, reduce water temperature, improve wildfire resilience, and enhance carbon storage. The total purchase price of the property was \$2,345,000. Funding for this purchase and associated expenses includes a \$1,500,000 grant from the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Fund and a \$665,402 grant from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Riparian Protection Program, with the remaining funds provided by the WLT. Whatcom County was awarded the PSAR grant funds and WLT was awarded the WWRP grant funds. Since both of these grants are for the purchase of the same property and both are managed by RCO, the two grants were combined into a single grant (RCO Grant Agreement No. 22-1356A/ Whatcom County Contract #202411030) with the County as the primary sponsor and WLT as the secondary sponsor. This grant agreement was signed in January 2025 with an effective date of July 1, 2023. RCO granted the County a waiver of retroactivity allowing reimbursement of expenditures incurred prior to the effective date of the grant agreement. As primary sponsor, Whatcom County will receive reimbursement for all of the grant funds including those incurred by WLT. Whatcom County will need to reimburse WLT for their eligible expenditures. The purpose of this agreement is to provide that mechanism.

Funding Amount and Source

This agreement will provide up to \$665,402 to WLT for the purchase of Phase 1 of the Stewart Mountain Community Forest. These costs are entirely funded by a grant agreement with RCO (Whatcom County Contract #202411030).

Please contact Gary Stoyka at extension 6218, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the terms of this agreement.

Encl.