

WHATCOM COUNTY

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Mark Personius, AICP
Director

Memorandum

TO: Honorable Whatcom County Councilmembers
Honorable Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive

THROUGH: Mark Personius, Director, PDS

FROM: Lauren Templeton, CEP Administrator

DATE: October 13, 2025

SUBJECT: Request approval to sign an agreement with Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) in order to secure matching funds for the Canyon Creek Forest Conservation Easement through RCO Forestland Preservation grant program.

Whatcom County Conservation Easement Program staff applied to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Forestland Preservation grant program for project 24-1886A Canyon Creek Forest Conservation Easement. The CEP is a voluntary program that compensates property owners for the value of their unused development rights and protects the land through the placement of permanent conservation easements to protect farmland, working forests, and important ecosystems in Whatcom County. The Canyon Creek Forest application has been awarded \$500,000 (~30 percent) matching funds to contribute towards the purchase of a forestland conservation easement on the Canyon Creek Forest property. The remaining 70 percent will be funded through the Whatcom County Conservation Futures Fund (~25 percent) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program (~45 percent).

Whatcom County Council approved to purchase the conservation easement through AB2025-565. This request is to sign a grant agreement to secure funding from RCO. It does not obligate Whatcom County to spend funds. This project will still require Council approval of a supplemental budget request. We will return for Council approval of the supplemental budget request in 2026.

Request Summary

Conservation Easement Program Staff requests approval for the Executive to sign the RCO Grant Agreement for project number 24-1886A Canyon Creek Forest Conservation Easement, to receive matching funds to support the acquisition of a forestry conservation easement on the Canyon Creek Forest property. This request is to secure funding from RCO.

Please contact Conservation Easement Program Administrator Lauren Templeton at (360)778-5956 with any questions.