

Supplemental Budget Request

Status: Pending

Non-Departmental

Suppl ID # 3159

Fund 175

Cost Center 17500

Originator: T. Schroeder

Expenditure Type: One-Time

Year 1 2021

Add'l FTE

Add'l Space

Priority 1

Name of Request: Skookum Creek Forest acquisition

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

5/6/21
Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	6610	Contractual Services	\$1,250,000
	Request Total		\$1,250,000

1a. Description of request:

The County will cost share with the Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) which has 1.75 million dollars to purchase 1,000 acres of riparian forest land known as Skookum II. A portion of the Land Trust's funding was secured through a \$875,000 WWRP grant from the state for this land acquisition. The property is currently under contract for the appraised price of 3 million dollars. WLT is seeking matching funds through the Conservation Future Fund to help support this acquisition.

The Whatcom Land Trust will own and manage the property and the County will hold a conservation and public access agreement on the property. The property consists of riparian forest land running nearly 2.5 miles on both sides of Skookum Creek, the major tributary supplying cold, clear water to the Nooksack's South Fork.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) wrote: "This purchase is one of the largest near-term conservation opportunities for the South Fork Nooksack and has outsized significance to the water quality, quantity and habitat benefits to all the living communities that rely on the South Fork Nooksack." The support of this project through Conservation Futures Fund will benefit the public by creating exceptional recreation opportunities and by helping ensure cold, clear water essential to salmonoid species at the Lummi Hatchery and in the South Fork of the Nooksack.

Whatcom County has committed \$1,250,000 from the Conservation Futures Fund as the final contribution towards purchase of the property.

1b. Primary customers:

Whatcom County residents

2. Problem to be solved:

Protecting Skookum Creek's upstream riparian forest will help ensure a continued vital supply of cold, clear water to the Lummi Hatchery and South Fork of the Nooksack and preserve old growth forest which maintains and grows the carbon stocks we have in these forests. These benefits align with the purpose and intention of the Conservation Futures Fund in protecting and preserving natural lands.

3a. Options / Advantages:

WLT has requested a matching 1.25 million to acquire the property. The County will hold a conservation and public access agreement on the property. The Conservation Futures Fund will have a projected fund balance of \$3.75 million when we include the cost of the Skookum II purchase.

3b. Cost savings:

Preserving pristine forestland is an investment we can make now for today and the future.

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4a. Outcomes:

1000 acres of riparian forest land will be acquired for the benefit of all.

4b. Measures:

Acquired property will be protected and preserved. When combined with Skookum I, Skookum II will provide in a beautiful natural setting 5.3 miles of non-motorized public access along an existing forest roadway for hiking, biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. The trail will terminate at Arlecho Creek with stunning views of the Twin Sisters Range. It will also enable public access to remote DNR state forestland northeast of Skookum II.

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

Parks Department

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

Michael McFarlane, Parks Director

6. Funding Source:

Conservation Futures Fund