



King County

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Attachment 1

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CLERK
KING COUNTY COUNCIL

May 27, 2009

The Honorable Dow Constantine
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Constantine:

On May 19, 2009 King County partnered with Washington State Department of Natural Resources to permanently preserve the Raging River Watershed located east of State Route 18 near the highway's junction with Interstate 90 in unincorporated King County. In Ordinance 16495, which appropriated funds to protect the Raging River headwaters, the King County Council requested the submittal of a report specifying details of the purchase and related documents. The proviso reads as follows:

CIP Project 315173, Raging river headwaters, funds the purchase of development rights and a conservation easement to preserve approximately four thousand acres of working natural forest. Within one week of the purchase, the executive shall report to the council the details of the purchase, including appraisal documents and the final agreement.

The report should be presented to the committee of the whole at the first meeting after finalization of the agreement. Additionally, the report must be filed in the form of twelve copies with the clerk of the council, who will retain the original and will forward copies to each councilmember and to the committee coordinators for the physical environment committee and the committee of the whole or their successors.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR) paid \$17.43 million to Fruit Growers Supply Company for the fee ownership of a 7,000 acre property in the Raging River watershed. Immediately before the State's purchase, King County acquired from Fruit Growers 60 development rights and a conservation easement covering 4,372 acres of the property for \$3,610,000. Altogether, the State's 7,000 acre fee acquisition and King County's

conservation easement acquisition provided the Fruit Grower's Supply Company with \$21.04 million to close the transaction. Enclosed for King County Council's consideration are the following documents related to the sale:

1. Signed King County Raging River Conservation Easement
2. King County / Fruit Growers Raging River Conservation Easement Purchase and Sale Agreement
3. Final King County Raging River Conservation Easement Appraisal
4. State DNR / Fruit Growers Fee Acquisition Purchase and Sale Agreement

Without King County's involvement, the Raging River headwaters would not have been sold into State ownership. Rather, the Fruit Growers Supply Company would have retained its ownership to sell in the future to a private timber company and/or for development purposes. Furthermore, WA DNR purchased the land from Fruit Growers for inclusion in its inventory of School Trust Land property. As School Trust Land, the State has a fiduciary duty to manage the property as a revenue-producing forest, and could ultimately sell the property for development purposes according to its highest and best use in the future. However, King County's conservation easement purchase will prevent this from happening; instead the Raging River headwaters will be forever protected from development and maintained as a working forest.

This conservation easement acquisition of the upper Raging River provides connectivity to large blocks of existing public lands, which include the 94,000 acre Cedar River Watershed, 13,000 acre Tiger Mountain State Forest, 1,800 acre Taylor Mountain County Forest, and the 2,000 acre Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area.

The property possesses forest resource values, scenic values, open space values, recreational values, educational values, natural ecosystem values (e.g., values related to timber stands consisting of Douglas Fir, Western Hemlock, Western Red Cedar, and Red Alder, protection of streams and groundwater recharge), fish habitat values, and clean air values that are of great importance to the people of King County and the State of Washington. The property includes more than four miles of high quality spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead – including nearly one-fifth of the vast Snoqualmie River Basin's wild Chinook population.

By acquiring the 4,372 acre Raging River conservation easement, King County has helped to permanently preserve more than 150,000 acres of forestland and open space – by far the most successful open space conservation record of any county in the nation.

The TDR Bank's involvement in the Raging River acquisition was strategic in that it will catalyze a partnership and leverage conservation dollars into the future – two important TDR Bank goals.

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This has been a successful partnership between King County and the State of Washington to protect the property from development with great support from leading conservation organizations such as Cascade Land Conservancy and the Mountains to Sound Greenway, as well as the King County Council and the King County Conservation Futures Citizen Advisory Committee. If you have any questions, please contact Rod Brandon, Director of Environmental Sustainability, at 206-263-9605 or Bob Burns, Deputy Director of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-263-6296.

Thank you for your support in making this historic acquisition.

Sincerely,



Kurt Triplett
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Tom Bristow, Interim Chief of Staff

Saroja Reddy, Policy Staff Director

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Frank Abe, Communications Director

Rod Brandon, Director of Environmental Sustainability, King County Executive Office

Bob Cowan, Director, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Beth Goldberg, Deputy Director, OMB

Theresa Jennings, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Bob Burns, Deputy Director, DNRP

Mark Isaacson, Director, Water and Land Resources Division, DNRP

Tesia Forbes, Budget Analyst, OMB