



March 6, 2019

Senator Christine Rolfes
 Chair, Senate Ways and Means Committee
 Washington State Senate
 303 John A. Cherberg Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

Senator John Braun
 Ranking Member, Senate Ways and Means Committee
 Washington State Senate
 403A Legislative Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

Representative Steve Tharinger
 Chair, Capital Budget Committee
 Washington State House of Representatives
 314 John O'Brien Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

Representative Richard DeBolt
 Ranking Minority Member, Capital Budget Committee
 Washington State House of Representatives
 425A Legislative Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Support for Trust Land Transfers requests in the 2019-2021 Capital Budget

Dear Chair and Ranking Members:

The undersigned organizations are writing to support funding in the Governor's proposed budget of \$14.8 million for the Trust Land Transfer program. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Board of Natural Resources (BNR) have nominated a total of 10 projects for a total funding amount of \$27.15 million for Trust Land Transfer. At a minimum, the 2019-2021 capital budget should fund the 14.8 million in projects identified in the Governor's budget request. We also support additional funding for projects nominated by DNR.

The TLT program, initiated in 1989, is a tool that allows the WA DNR to manage special lands for conservation purposes while sustaining and improving potential revenue sources for trust beneficiaries. Since its inception, over 126,000 acres have been transferred through Trust Land Transfers

This program provides significant opportunities for public benefits by providing numerous ecosystem services and recreational opportunities for Washington residents and the general public. Additionally, the program can help transition lands to conservation such as a Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA). NRCAs and other conservation lands provide important economic benefits to local communities through direct and indirect spending associated with recreation, overnight stays, dining and purchasing of other amenities. These values are consistent with the goals of our organizations and many of our organizations have supported the establishment of NRCAs in the past such as the Dabob Bay NRCA (2009 & 2016), Middle Fork Snoqualmie NRCA (2001), Mount Si NRCA (1987 and its many expansions), Morning Star NRCA (2007), and the West Tiger Mountain NRCA (1989).

This year DNR determined 10 parcels of DNR trust land “provide greater social benefits through non-revenue generation” and “should be converted from revenue generation status to a conservation or open space function” using TLT process.

We believe that all of the parcels which DNR nominated for Trust Land Transfer should be included in the 2019-21 capital budget. Of these, we especially support the 4 parcels listed below for this year’s budget.

High Priority Trust Land Transfers

1. **Dabob Bay (Jefferson County)** - This project will preserve 900 acres of trust land within the 2016 approved boundaries of the Dabob NRCA. Dabob Bay is recognized as one the most intact estuarine embayments remaining in Puget Sound, including pristine shorelines, globally imperiled plant associations, significant nearshore habitat for ESA listed salmon, and unstable slopes. Protection of this ecosystem will also help to insure the water quality of Puget Sound and the shellfish industry.
2. **Devils Lake (Jefferson County)** - This project will transfer 370 acres of trust land to the Devils Lake NRCA, also on the slopes of Quilcene and Dabob Bays. The area will protect one mile of shoreline on Puget Sound with unstable slopes, a globally rare forest ecosystem, and provide additional low impact recreation opportunities.
3. **Middle Fork Snoqualmie (King County)** - This parcel will transfer 23 acres of trust land to the Middle Fork Snoqualmie NRCA. This parcel is surrounded on three sides by the existing NRCA and will protect riparian areas along the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River as well as protect a trail that provides river access.
4. **Morning Star (Snohomish County)** - This parcel will add 1,090 acres of trust lands to the Morning Star NRCA. This land not only contains forested areas which support numerous endangered species, but also lies within the Spada Lake watershed which provides drinking water to the city of Everett and much of Snohomish County.

Please continue to support the DNR’s Trust Land Transfer program and, specifically, support full funding for the four modest but impactful projects identified in the Governor’s budget request for the 2019-2021 capital budget.

Sincerely,

Tom Uniack
Executive Director
Washington Wild

Mike Town
Chair, State Forest Committee
Sierra Club - Sierra Club, Washington State Chapter

Ann Darlington
President
Friends of Heybrook Ridge

Rick McGuire
President
Alpine Lakes Protection Society

Mark Boyar
President
MidFORC Coalition

Peter Bahls
Executive Director
Northwest Watershed Institute

Thomas O’Keefe
Northwest Stewardship Director
American Whitewater

Jon Hoekstra
Executive Director
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Mo McBroom
Director of Government Relations
The Nature Conservancy of Washington

Phil Fenner
President
North Cascades Conservation Council

Michelle Connor
President & CEO
Forterra

Marlies Wierenga
Pacific Northwest Conservation Manager
WildEarth Guardians

John McGlenn
President
Washington Wildlife Federation

Joe Sambataro
Northwest Regional Director
Access Fund

Mitch Friedman
Executive Director
Conservation Northwest

Kurt Beardslee
Executive Director
Wild Fish Conservancy

Richard Tucker
Executive Director
Jefferson Land Trust

Bill Taylor
Vice President
Taylor Shellfish

Donna Osseward
President
Olympic Park Associates

Kathy Johnson
Forest Practices Chair
Pilchuck Audubon Society

Patricia A. Jones, PhD
Executive Director
Olympic Forest Coalition

Megan Birzell
Washington State Director
The Wilderness Society

Annie Cubberly
President, Polly Dyer Cascadia Chapter
Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Joan Crooks
CEO
Washington Environmental Council
Washington Conservation Voters

CC: House Capital Budget Committee Members
Senate Ways and Means Committee Members
Rob Duff, Natural Resources Director, Governor Jay Inslee's Office