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## Upper Wenatchee Community Lands Plan - Grant

<b>Grant Name</b>	Upper Wenatchee Community Lands Plan - Grant	<b>Today's Date</b>	12/15/2023
<b>Staff Size</b>	365	<b>Organization Name</b>	Trust for Public Land
<b>Total Membership</b>	50,000	<b>Annual Operating Budget</b>	\$151,981,000.00
<b>BIPOC-led</b>	No	<b>Operating Budget Year</b>	
<b>C-Suite Staff</b>		<b>Tax Status/Organization Type</b>	501c3 Organization
<b>Notes</b>			

### Project Information

<b>Project/Campaign Name</b>	Upper Wenatchee Community Lands Plan	<b>Project Address</b>	
<b>Project Location (State or Territory)</b>	WA	<b>Amount Requested from Alliance</b>	\$50,000.00

### Proposal Questions

<p><b>1. Purpose/History Of Organization</b></p>	<p>Trust for Public Land (TPL) was founded in 1972 on the conviction that all people need access to nature and the outdoors, close to home, in the communities where they live.</p>	<p><b>7. Measurable On-Ground Outcomes</b></p>	<p>Measurable on-the-ground outcomes that we hope to accomplish over the next year are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appraisal for Phases 1 and 2 completed and approved by the USFS and the landowner.</li> <li>2. USFS's request for \$7 million of FY 2024 LWCF funding for Phase 1 appropriated.</li> <li>3. USFS's request for \$8 million of FY 2025 LWCF funding for Phase 2 ranked in top 5 of President's Budget.</li> </ol>
<p><b>2. Final Success</b></p>	<p>The mission of TPL is to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Our organization focuses on trails, parks, schoolyards, and public lands. Within these initiatives, our work is driven by four commitments: equity, health, climate, and community. We work alongside communities across the country to create, protect, and steward the nature-rich places that are vital to human well-being.</p> <p>In the Pacific Northwest, and with generous support from The Conservation Alliance (TCA), during 2023 we have been working to acquire and protect the Tualatin Mountain Forest near Portland, OR. With this application, we are excited to engage TCA in a land conservation project in the Upper Wenatchee Watershed, one of Washington's premier destinations for outdoor recreation.</p>	<p><b>8. Evaluate Your Progress</b></p>	<p>We will evaluate our progress against the tasks and timeline provided in Section 4 above.</p> <p>Success for Phases 1 and 2 is acquiring</p>

permanent public access to popular recreation areas, preserving an important wildlife corridor, and creating the opportunity for watershed scale restoration.

and conveying these lands to the USFS.

However, success for the larger 35,000-acre project is conserving Phases 1 and 2 in such a way that there is strong support and a clear pathway for conserving the remaining acres. This will be achieved if we continue to maintain and strengthen our partnerships with key stakeholders, especially with the County.

### 3. Location Details

In the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF), along the east slopes of Washington's Cascade Range in Chelan County, TPL is pursuing a phased acquisition of 35,000 forested acres beginning with the two phases of this proposal, the ten-parcel, 5,650-acre Phase 1 (Lower Peshastin/Mission Creek) and the eleven-parcel, 6,408-acre Phase 2 (Upper Peshastin Creek).

TPL seeks to acquire these checkerboard parcels and convey them to the US Forest Service (USFS). Both Phases are classified by the USFS's Watershed Condition Framework as "Functioning At-Risk." Restoration is needed, but the existing checkerboard ownership pattern and shared management of the roads impede such efforts. Acquisition would create the opportunity for the USFS and its partners to:

- Restore ecosystems naturally resilient to climate change effects, helping to protect the ecosystems and communities of Wenatchee, Cashmere, and Leavenworth, currently at high risk for catastrophic wildfire.
- Decommission roads and stabilize sediments, including on adjacent federal lands, the primary action needed to improve watershed conditions and downstream fish habitat, especially with increased flooding and higher severity storms from climate change.
- Enhance and restore carbon sequestration by tree planting (of appropriate tree species and densities) and other management techniques.

Per The Climate Atlas, Phases 1 and 2 have high benefits for carbon sequestration and climate resilience, ranking in the 2nd highest quintile for the Composite Model (driven by these lands being in the highest quintile for Total Carbon and Climate Resilience).

The acquisition of Phases 1 and 2 would protect habitat for federal threatened and endangered grizzly bear, gray wolf, northern spotted owl, Upper Columbia steelhead and spring chinook, Mid-Columbia bull trout, white bark pine, showy stickseed, and Wenatchee

### 9. TCA Funding Plan

Grant funding would be applied to project expenses occurring in TPL's Fiscal Year 2025, beginning July 1, 2024. Specifically, funding from The Conservation Alliance would go toward the cost of the appraisal for Phases 1 and 2 (budgeted at \$200,000 due to the need for timber cruising, and included in \$300,000 in FY 2025 expenses for Professional Services, per the attached project budget).

A grant from The Conservation Alliance would have a meaningful impact on offsetting the described costs.

Mountains checkermallow.

This acquisition would also protect an important migration corridor for large-ranging gray wolf and wolverine, and their prey species, mule deer and elk. The north-south extent of Phases 1 and 2 spans the remaining primary west-east migration corridor through which mule deer and elk south of US-2 migrate west in the summer up into the Cascade mountains, and east in the winter, down to the foothills west of Wenatchee.

4. Strategy & Timeline For Final Success

The acquisition of the 12,058-acre Phases 1 and 2 is part of an overall effort to acquire, and save from potential development, 35,000 acres of checkerboarded, privately held forest land in Chelan County's Upper Wenatchee Watershed by the end of 2030.

TPL has long sought the conservation of these lands. As discussed in Section 5, in 2014 TPL co-led a 20-month process with the County, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT), and The Nature Conservancy to develop the Upper Wenatchee Community Lands Plan, a community-driven plan that identified lands that are a high priority to conserve for their recreation, wildlife, and forest values. A majority of these lands are now owned by Chinook Forest Partners. In 2022, after multiple attempts with prior owners, TPL finally secured an option agreement with Chinook.

In 2023, TPL, in partnership with the County and CDLT, then reaffirmed the community's support to conserve these lands. The County and other partners also noted that the community would have more say in how Phases 1 and 2 are managed if owned by the USFS, rather than by a private party. In the last two years, TPL supported the OWNF in preparing competitive funding applications for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants, including securing letters of support and lobbying federal elected officials for funding. The OWNF's funding request for \$7 million for Phase 1 is ranked #5 in the nation in the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Budget, a great start for this multi-phase project. We are hopeful that OWNF's request for \$8 million for Phase 2, submitted fall 2023, will also rank high in the President's FY 2025 Budget.

The plan to complete this project is as follows:

- Date Task
- 9/2024 Complete appraisal
- 9/2024 Secure Phase 1 funding
- 10/2024 Support USFS in completing their environmental site assessment

10. JEDI Efforts and Impact

TPL is committed to sustained and comprehensive organizational development to advance justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work, including defining authentic and credible roles for TPL, and leveraging our place in the conservation movement to drive change.

Over the last year, TPL has deepened this commitment, taking additional steps to deliver on these values, including:

**TRIBAL LAND WORK**  
Building on three decades of work with Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities, in November 2023 TPL announced a project that will restore nearly 30,000 acres to the Penobscot Nation in Maine; this represents the largest land return effort to date between a U.S. based non-profit and a Tribal Nation.

**BLACK HISTORY AND CULTURE WORK**  
TPL has been building relationships and working to better understand community needs, which will guide our efforts to create, protect, and activate public spaces of historical and cultural significance to Black communities.

12/2024 Support USFS in resolving remaining title issues  
3/2025 Complete appraisal review and approval by the USFS and landowner  
6/2025 Secure Purchase and Sale Agreement with the USFS  
9/2025 Secure Phase 2 funding  
12/2025 Close on Phase 1 – TPL acquires land from Chinook and conveys to USFS  
12/2026 Close on Phase 2 – TPL acquires land from Chinook and conveys to USFS

This project would support the County's important recreation economy. In 2020, outdoor recreation on public lands in Chelan County generated a total economic contribution of \$442.9 million (10.8% of the county's Gross Domestic Product), 3,081 jobs (6.7% of all county jobs, 20% of all private sector jobs), and \$29.7 million in state and local tax revenues. These public land recreation assets are enjoyed by the County's growing population of 78,000+ residents and more than 2 million visitors a year, with many coming from the Seattle-metro area (population 4.1 million) just two hours west. With over 88% of residents and visitors alike using trails, trails form the backbone of the County's recreation economy.

Although the County has high quality recreation, it is not keeping pace with demand. The current checkerboard of private ownership poses a range of recreational access challenges, including a lack of contiguous trails across the OWNF and access to thousands of acres of OWNF. This project would protect Phases 1 and 2 from development (current zoning would allow 598 twenty-acre lots) while supporting a range of recreational opportunities.

The acquisition of Phases 1 and 2 would increase and enhance popular recreation activities in the area, including trail-based activities such as hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, and backcountry skiing, along with motorcycling, and OHV riding. This acquisition would also provide access to 12,058 acres of forestlands for dispersed recreational activities such as hunting and wildlife viewing.

The acquisition of Phase 1 would protect the top of Horse Lake Mountain and connect the No. 2 Canyon and the Sage Hills/Horse Lake Reserve trail systems, enabling access to a network of 50 miles of non-motorized multi-use trails, especially for the many Wenatchee residents who live close to the Sage Hills trailhead. It would also protect a mile of Red Hill Trail #1223 and a half-mile of Tronsen Ridge Trail #1204, both part of

the 25k and 50k Red Devil Challenge Trail Runs.

The acquisition of Phase 2 would open access to and through Iron Mountain, a popular destination for motorcyclists, mountain bikers, hikers, and backcountry skiers, and the entry point for miles of the area's trails, including Etienne Creek Trail and routes into the Alpine Lakes Wilderness only four miles away. Phase 2 would also protect two sections of County Line Trail #1226, a 0.3-mile segment of a 9-mile loop to Miller Peak, Iron Bear Mountain and Teanaway Ridge, and a 1-mile segment of an 8.5-mile loop to Joker and Echo Canyon, both very popular with mountain bikers.

**5. Key Decision Makers**

Bringing these checkerboarded lands into public ownership is a priority for the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. To achieve this goal, Trust for Public Land has slowly and deliberately built support for this project with local, state, and federal agencies and elected officials, tribal organizations, non-governmental organizations, recreation user groups, and community members.

Key actions include:

From 2014-2016, with the County, CDLT, and The Nature Conservancy, TPL co- led the development of the community- driven Upper Wenatchee Community Lands Plan. After numerous public meetings and community surveys, the community identified lands that are a priority to conserve for their recreation, wildlife, and forest values.

In early 2022, after 18 months of negotiations with Chinook Forest Partners, TPL secured an option through 2030 to acquire Chinook's 35,000 acres in Chelan County. TPL must acquire Phases 1 and 2 by 2026 to preserve the opportunity to acquire Chinook's other Chelan County lands.

In 2023, with the County and CDLT, TPL co-led community meetings and tours that re-affirmed the community's strong support for the acquisition of Chinook's 35,000 acres and also cemented the recognition that the best way for the County and other partners to have influence in how Phases 1 and 2 are managed is if the USFS, and not a private party, owns them. This is significant in a County that is highly concerned with any increases to its public land base given that the County is already 87% publicly owned (with 80% owned by the USFS).

Over the next three years, TPL intends to deepen our partnerships across the board, continue to reaffirm the

**11. Confidential Items**

This proposal may be shared with others in its entirety.

community's support, and support the federal delegation in securing funding. Given the level of support this project currently enjoys, we are hopeful this support will only get stronger.

#### 6. Elevate Voices

The 2014-2016 Upper Wenatchee Community Lands Plan planning process included robust community engagement with town hall meetings, surveys, and invitations sent to over 6,700 households. And for the 2023 community meetings, invitations were again mailed to thousands of households and announcements sent via multiple channels. The County also hosted a webpage to update the public on the plan's implementation and future meetings.

Meetings were well attended, and attendees voiced strong support for the conservation of Phases 1 and 2. Many organizations also provided support letters, including the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Yakama Nation Fisheries, Team Naturaleza (connects Wenatchee area Latino/Hispanic families to the outdoors), Wenatchee Valley TREAD (Trails, Recreation, Education, Advocacy, and Development), Washington Trails Association, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club, Wenatchee Valley Sportsmen, Northwest Motorcycle Association, environmental and conservation groups, and state agencies.

While a concerted effort was made during both public engagement processes to get the word out to those living in the census tract of Phases 1 and 2, of a population considered highly vulnerable per the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool (61% of this tract's population is low income), it is unclear how many individuals, if any, were a part of the process since participants could remain anonymous. Given that this tract is in the 88th percentile for Projected Wildfire Risk, the 94th percentile for Expected Building Loss Rate from natural hazards, and the 89th percentile for Expected Population Loss Rate due to fatalities and injuries resulting from natural hazards, this tract would benefit from the completion of this project because it will create the opportunity for landscape scale restoration to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

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