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Washington TLT State Forest Land Protection Campaign - Grant

Grant Name	Washington TLT State Forest Land Protection Campaign - Grant	Today's Date	12/14/2023
Staff Size	5	Organization Name	Washington Wild
Total Membership	11,000	Annual Operating Budget	\$552,000.00
BIPOC-led	No	Operating Budget Year	
C-Suite Staff		Tax Status/Organization Type	501c3 Organization
Notes			

Project Information

Project/Campaign Name	Washington TLT State Forest Land Protection Campaign	Project Address	
Project Location (State or Territory)	WA	Amount Requested from Alliance	\$40,000.00

Proposal Questions

1. Purpose/History Of Organization	<p>WA Wild protects and restores wild lands and waters in WA State through advocacy, education and civic engagement. Since our founding in 1979, we've helped to permanently protect nearly 3 million acres of Wilderness. WA Wild is committed to an approach based on building winning coalitions, highlighting compelling and diverse voices in support of protecting our remaining ancient forests, clean and safe drinking water and wildlife habitat. In 2023, we still adhere to these values, even while seemingly less organizations have the capacity or interest in working in partnerships and coalitions. Each year, we coordinate a dozen letters on conservation issues in WA State signed by more than 600 elected officials, local businesses, faith leaders and conservation, recreation and wildlife organizations. This creates capacity for organizations to weigh in on these issues, highlight a diversity of voices supporting conservation and provide one-stop-shopping for key decision makers.</p>	7. Measurable On-Ground Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate and lead efforts for a coalition of organizations supporting Trust Land Transfer protections in Washington State (including monthly meetings) 2. Coordinate and submit 3 sign-on letters with more than 60 total signatories supporting the protection of state forestland under the Trust Land Transfer program 3. Organize and coordinate 2 educational field tours to candidate areas for Trust Land Transfer Protection 4. Secure the protection of 3,000 – 5,000 acres of state forest lands managed for conservation and recreation through the Trust Land Transfer Program
2. Final Success	<p>In 2025, an additional 3,000 – 5,000 acres of forests, rivers, wildlife habitat, lakes and streams on Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands will be protected through the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) Program to be managed for conservation and recreation</p>	8. Evaluate Your Progress	<p>Based on the project timeline identified in this grant, we will evaluate our progress and success by our ability to meet the activities listed in each of the benchmarks (including the administrative prioritization and legislative funding phases). Additionally, the TLT coalition</p>

values rather than logging to benefit trust beneficiaries.

plans to meet monthly to assess and evaluate our progress toward these goals. The 3-5 outcomes listed in this grant are measurable. Ultimately, a successful project will result in 3,000 – 5,000 acres of state forest land protected through the Trust Land Transfer program and managed for conservation and recreation (instead of timber) by May 2025.

3. Location Details

In 2023, more than 4,000 acres of state lands to be protected under the TLT Program and managed for conservation and recreation. The next opportunity to identify TLT lands will be in 2025 and we believe we have an excellent opportunity to protect 3,000 – 5,000 acres of state forest land.

Applications for TLT lands were submitted to DNR in the fall of 2023 and will be prioritized by the agency with the assistance of an advisory group in the spring of 2024. While we don't know what parcels will be prioritized by the agency, here are a few examples of projects that we intend to advocate for around the state:

- Morning Star (1,071 acres, Snohomish County) - This project includes remnant old growth forest and sub alpine meadows and would be added to the existing NRCA managed by DNR.
- Blakely Island (184 acres, San Juan County). The property has significant marine habitat and many trees that exhibit old growth characteristics within the San Juan Islands.
- South Fork Snoqualmie (95 acres, King County) – This project would connect an isolated NRCA parcel to the greater Middle Fork Snoqualmie NRCA and extend a protected low-elevation wildlife corridor adjacent to the South Fork Snoqualmie River near North Bend, WA.
- Elwha River Watershed (3,089 acres, Clallam County) – This project includes important old-growth and wildlife habitat in the Elwha River Watershed. Managing this area for conservation and recreation would secure the drinking water supply for Port Angeles and enhance portions of the Olympic Discovery Trail and other areas used by hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians.
- Quimper Peninsula Forest (1,371 acres, Jefferson County) – This includes four parcels that include remnant old-growth forests, mount bike trail systems and hiking and equestrian trails near Port Townsend.
- Thorpe (192 acres, Spokane County) Within Spokane city limits, this DNR property has been nominated for TLT consideration as part of a designated wildlife corridor and provides recreational opportunities in a rapidly developing part of the city.

9. TCA Funding Plan

We plan to use Conservation Alliance funding to provide key funding for Jim Freeburg (Freeburg Policy Solutions, LLC) who has extensive experience and knowledge from working in the Washington State Legislature and who played a key role in the successful protection of 4,000 acres of state forest land through the TLT process in 2023 and the recent revitalization of the program. Funding will also support WA Wild's leadership in coordinating grassroots support for the projects through coordination of sign on letters, action alerts and obtaining high quality photos of the areas we are working to protect for advocacy use.

WA forests provide some of the best carbon sequestering opportunities in the world and enhance WA State's ability to provide climate resilience in the face of global warming. By protecting underrepresented complex old-growth forests and naturally generated mature forests through the TLT program, we also avoid these parcels being sold off to development where they would be a negative versus positive impact on climate resilience.

4. Strategy & Timeline For Final Success

WA Wild plans to work with the WA Trust Land Transfer Coalition, led by Jim Freeburg of Freeburg Policy Solutions LLC to advocate for the protection of 3,000 – 5,000 acres of state forest lands through the TLT Program. The Coalition includes representation and input from the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, Mountains to Sound Greenway, Northwest Watershed Institute, Alpine Lakes Protection Society, Middle Fork Coalition and Washington Wild. The strategy includes two distinct steps that will occur between April 2024 and May 2025.

1. Administrative Candidate Prioritization (April – Dec 2024) - Potential TLT projects are reviewed and prioritized to be protected and managed for conservation and recreation. This effort is led by the Washington Department of Natural Resources and approved by its leadership (Washington Commissioner of Public Lands and Washington Board of Natural Resources). This step results in the inclusion of prioritized TLT projects into their formal agency budget request to the WA Governor.
2. Funding Approval by The WA State Legislature (Jan – May 2025) – Because of a constitutional mandate that all state trust lands benefit trust beneficiaries, a trust land transfer requires the State Legislature to approve funding to fairly compensate trust beneficiaries before protecting state forest lands. This approval occurs as part of the capital budget process each biennium. The final result is passage of a capitol budget that includes funding for prioritized TLT projects which is then signed into law by the Governor.

If successful, protecting state forest through the TLT program will preserve important existing recreational access and provide future opportunities for responsible recreation to local communities and visitors who contribute to the outdoor recreation economy. An important aspect of the TLT process is that it manages state trust lands for conservation and recreation, while compensating the trust to replace these lands with more productive, accessible

10. JEDI Efforts and Impact

Washington Wild began an organizational Diversity, Equity and Inclusion journey in 2019, working to demonstrate our commitment to protecting wild lands and waters for ALL of us. As a historically white-led organization, our board and staff understand that the impacts on our climate, clean air and water and environment are often felt first, and disproportionately, by people of color, indigenous peoples and less affluent communities. As an organization we are working to include more diverse perspectives on our board and staff internally, as well as change how and to whom we do outreach toward protecting Washington's wild lands and waters. We have established a DEI statement on our website, finalized a resolution to respect tribal treaty rights and lifeways and have begun providing tribal land acknowledgements at all of our events. We look forward to continuing to expand these efforts.

and appropriate working forest lands.
This is a win-win economically.

PROJECT TIMELINE, KEY BENCHMARKS AND ACTIVITIES

April –
June 2024 DNR TLT Advisory Committee
Prioritizations

June 2024

- Stakeholder Field Tours – WA Wild and Organize 2-3 half-day or full-day field tours to priority TLT state land candidates that include local conservation, wildlife and recreation advocates as well as local elected officials and opinion leaders.
- Commissioner Letter – WA Wild will coordinate a sign-on letter to WA Commissioner of Public lands urging full support for TLT candidates identified by DNR (30-50 signatories).
- Action Alert - WA Wild will send out an action alert to our activists and engage other conservation allies to send to their lists generating emails to the Public Lands Commissioner and WA DNR prioritizing key TLT projects.

July 2024

- Board of Natural Resources Letter – WA Wild will coordinate a sign-on letter to the WA Board of Natural Resources from the Washington Trust Land Transfer Coalition leadership urging approval of the priority TLT projects (6-10 signers plus a list of the more than 100 statewide supporters of TLT).

July 2024 Board of Natural Resources
Approval

Sept 2024 DNR Submits Budget to
Governor

Oct 2024

- Governor Letter – WA Wild will coordinate a sign-on letter to the WA Governor urging full support for TLT candidates identified by DNR to be included in the Governor's budget to the State Legislature (30-50 signatories).
- Action Alert – WA Wild will send out an action alert to our activists and engage other conservation allies to send to their lists generating emails to the WA Governor supporting that the TLT candidates identified by DNR to be included in the Governor's budget to the State Legislature.

Dec 2024 Governor Submits Budget to
Legislature

Jan 2025

- WA House and Senate Budget Committee Letter – WA Wild will coordinate a sign-on letter to the WA

State House and Senate Budget Committees supporting full funding for the TLT candidates identified in the Governor's budget and supported by DNR (30-50 signatories).

- Action Alert – WA Wild will send out an action alert to our activists and engage other conservation allies to send to their lists generating emails to the WA State House and Senate Budget Committees supporting full funding for the TLT candidates identified in the Governor's budget and supported by DNR (* Any lobbying expenses incurred by this action will be covered by funds separate from the Conservation Alliance).

April 2025 State Legislature Approve Final Budget for FY25-27 Biennium

May 2025 Governor Signs Budget

May 2025

- Final Press Release – A final press release will be sent out to statewide news outlets by WA Wild including quotes from diverse voices celebrating the protection of state forest lands through the TLT program.

5. Key Decision Makers

The Washington TLT program has been described as the state's best, and least known, environmental program. In Washington state, the DNR manages more than three million acres of state trust land. Revenue generated by these trust lands enters a fund that supports K-12 schools, universities state institutions, as well as essential services such as fire, EMT, ports, and libraries. When it is determined that certain trust lands provide greater social and/or ecological benefits, the TLT program provides funding for DNR to conserve those lands while purchasing more economically profitable replacement lands elsewhere. Since its inception in 1989, the TLT program has preserved more than 128,000 acres of state trust land for fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, education, and other community uses. Some of the state's most treasured places—Mt. Si, Blanchard Mountain, and Deception Pass State Park—have benefited from the TLT program. At the same time, DNR has improved economic returns for the state trust creating a rare win-win opportunity.

The TLT process requires: (1) DNR to prioritize and approve projects (nominated by Tribes, organizations and individuals); (2) the Governor to put forward those recommendations to the State Legislature; (3) and. the State Legislature to approve the funding request in the capitol budget.

In 2023, all three entities (DNR, Governor and State Legislature) worked to submit, pass and sign House Bill 1460 which focused on revitalizing the TLT

11. Confidential Items

No. Although advertising specific strategies and timelines as described here for the foundation publicly would not be beneficial toward the implementation of these goals.

program by streamlining and improving the process, implementation and rationale for protecting state forest lands as part of this program. The bill passed overwhelmingly in both the House and the Senate and was supported by an advisory committee that gave recommendations to DNR on how to revitalize this program. In 2023, more than 4,000 acres of state lands were protected for conservation and recreation through the TLT program.

6. Elevate Voices WA Wild plans to work with the TLT Coalition to implement several activities focused on grassroots citizen action. We will coordinate at least 3 sign-on letters showing support for TLT protections to key decision makers from Tribes, elected officials, local businesses and conservation, recreation and wildlife groups from around the state. These letters will add to the current list of 100 supporters of the TLT program statewide and provide “one stop shopping” for key decision makers trying to understand who support this effort. WA Wild will also generate hundreds of letters from individuals supporting TLT protections from our list of activists as well as engaging other organizations to activate their list of supporters on this issue. We also plan to highlight diverse voices in support of these state forest lands being protected through the TLT program.

Since the TLT revitalization bill (HB 1460) passed in 2023, there has been a broader and more inclusive process for identifying TLT proposals. For example, In Section 3 of HB 1460 the law specifically calls out Tribes as possible nominators and recipients of TLT parcels and requires DNR to consult with Tribes on TLT transactions. During the current round of TLT nominations there have been a few tribal nominated projects. WA Wild will use our relationships with Tribes to educate them about the TLT program and the opportunities to provide protection for forests and watersheds while protecting tribal treaty rights and lifeways.

There are some TLT projects that are closer to urban areas that provide more accessible (by walking or public transportation) recreational benefits to local communities. Issaquah Creek within the city limits of Issaquah is one such TLT nomination being considered in the current round.

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