



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor Laws of Minnesota 2017 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 03/27/2023

Project Title: Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor

Funds Recommended: \$2,458,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2017, Ch. 91, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 3(a)

Appropriation Language: \$2,458,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Minnesota Land Trust to acquire permanent conservation easements in Washington County. Of this amount, up to \$30,000 is for establishing a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17. A list of proposed permanent conservation easements must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Additional Legislative Changes: ML 2022, Chapter 77, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd 10. Carryforwards (b) The availability of the appropriation for Laws 2017, chapter 91, section 2, subdivision 3, paragraph (a), for Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor, is extended to June 30, 2025.

ML 2020, Ch. 104, Art. 1, Sec. 4, amended ML 2017, chapter 91, article 1, section 2, Subd 3(a) Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor: \$2,458,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Minnesota Land Trust to acquire permanent conservation easements in Washington County. Of this amount, up to \$120,000 is for establishing a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17. A list of proposed permanent conservation easements must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2022. [increase \$ stewardship]

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Wayne Ostlie

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Location Information

County Location(s): Washington.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Metro / Urban

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

Washington County's Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor contains one of the largest unprotected wildlife habitat complexes within the metropolitan area and has been identified as one of the County's top conservation priorities. The Minnesota Land Trust and Washington County will protect 369 acres of the Corridor's most threatened, high quality forest and aquatic habitat in this first phase of the project. This project represents a unique opportunity to conserve intact habitat of this magnitude within the LSOHC's Metropolitan Urbanizing Area, and includes nearly 5 miles of shoreline and supports 70 species in greatest conservation need.

Design and Scope of Work

The Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor has long been a conservation target of Washington County, DNR, Minnesota Land Trust and other conservation organizations due to its rich forest habitat and its abundant clear lakes which are currently completely undeveloped—a rare feature in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. The Minnesota Land Trust and Washington County have formed a partnership to complete this first phase of the Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor Project by securing a perpetual conservation easement on 369 acres which forms the critical core of the larger 2,700 acre Corridor. We intend to complete the full 735-acre project as initially proposed through additional leverage from program partners and existing OHF grants to the Land Trust (Metro Big Rivers 5, 6 and 7), with outcomes split proportionately among this (369 acres) and these other associated grants (366 acres).

This first phase of the Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor Project, known as the "Terrapin Lakes Site", will cover 369 acres of high quality habitat and more than 5 miles of shoreline that Warner Nature Center will own at the time of the easement. This project will ensure that the core wildlife habitat area of the Corridor will be protected forever from development, fragmentation and poor land management. This project represents a unique window in time due to having a motivated landowner in Warner Nature Center and to Washington County's commitment to dedicate funds from its Land and Water Legacy Fund. There is nothing that currently legally protects the property from development. The terms of the conservation easement will ensure the property's protection for generations to come.

This first phase of the project at the Terrapin Lakes Site is specifically noted as having:

- Oak and maple-basswood forest habitat identified as having high-quality biodiversity by the DNR due to its undisturbed canopy and significant age;
- High biodiversity for species in greatest conservation need such as Blanding's Turtle, the Common Snapping Turtle and Eastern Fox Snake, the Red-shouldered Hawk, Bald Eagle, Rose-Breasted Grosbeak, and American Woodcock;
- Nearly 5 miles of shoreline and riparian habitat on North and South Terrapin, Mays and Clear Lakes;
- High quality water discharge and recharge areas which help maintain aquatic habitat and water quality; and
- High quality undeveloped shallow (Upper Terrapin) and deep (Mays and Lower Terrapin) lakes.

This project represents an urgent and important protection opportunity due to the landowner's current interest in conservation and to the commitment of Washington County to participate in funding the project through its Land and Water Legacy Program. We anticipate >50% of the easement's acquisition costs to be funded by non-state sources, making this a very high leverage project for the Outdoor Heritage Fund. And while the project will not specifically require public access, more than 15,000 children and adults experience the site's unique and abundant wildlife habitat each year through Warner Nature Center's programs.

How does the plan address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species?

The extensive upland forests, grasslands, shallow lakes, bogs, and deep lakes of the Terrapin Lakes site form one of the most biologically important systems in the Twin Cities Metro area, providing habitat for some 77 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (see uploaded attachment for the complete list). The protection of these habitats has been identified in numerous plans as a conservation priority for Minnesota, including the Minnesota Biological Survey, the State Conservation and Preservation Plan, Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda, and the Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program Priorities. The central goal of this proposal is to protect the Terrapin Lakes site through a permanent conservation easement, leaving a lasting legacy for Minnesota's residents.

Describe how the plan uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:

The Terrapin Lakes site is a critically important site of biodiversity significance located within a mapped Metro Conservation Corridor and Washington County's Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor. The Carnelian Creek Corridor is an important natural land conservation wildlife corridor. The corridor connects the Terrapin Lakes site with other large natural areas in the county including Big Marine Park Reserve and the County's High Priority Tanglewood Corridor that extends to the St. Croix River, a National Scenic Riverway is managed by the National

Park Service and an Important Bird Area identified by Audubon. The Terrapin Lakes area is host to wetlands, forests, and grasslands resulting in more functional habitat for a wide variety of species of greatest conservation need.

Which two sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are most applicable to this project?

- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- LU8 Protect large blocks of forest land

Which two other plans are addressed in this program?

- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025
- Other : Land and Water Legacy Program Conservation Priorities: Top 10 Conservation Priorities for Washington County (2012)

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Metro / Urban

- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *The focal project area is captured within the Carnelian Creek Conservation Corridor and intersects with the Tanglewood Conservation Corridor, both of which are priority conservation targets for Washington County. Conservation plans for both corridors have been developed and are being used to target conservation action. The outcomes of this action to protect this core area will be measured and evaluated relative to the encompassing goals of those corridor plans.*

Does this program include leveraged funding?

-

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

The land protected through this conservation easement will be sustained through the best standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship jointly held by Washington County and the Minnesota Land Trust. The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally-accredited and insured land trust with a very successful stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring, effective records management, addressing inquiries and interpretations, tracking changes in ownership, investigating potential violations and defending the easement in case of a true violation. Funding for these easement stewardship activities is included in the project budget.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2021 (and in perpetuity)	MLT Stewardship and Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring of parcel in perpetuity	Enforcement if necessary	-

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?

Yes

Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?

Yes

Who will manage the easement?

Minnesota Land Trust

Who will be the easement holder?

Minnesota Land Trust and Washington County

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program?

No

Will the eased land be open for public use?

No

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the proposed acquisitions?

Yes

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:

The property includes various driveways, field roads and a network of hiking trails. These established trails and roads will be permitted in the terms of the easement and can be maintained if their use does not significantly impact the conservation values of the property. Creation of new roads/trails or expansion of existing ones will not be permitted.

Will the trails or roads remain and uses continue to be allowed after OHF acquisition?

Yes

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?

Existing trails and roads will be identified in the project baseline report and will be monitored annually as part of the Land Trust's stewardship and enforcement protocols. Maintenance of permitted roads/trails will be the responsibility of the landowner.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition?

No

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Conservation easement(s) procured	June 30, 2025

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/01/2025

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Appropriation Availability

Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary

for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Unless otherwise provided, the amounts in this section are available until June 30, 2020. For acquiring real property, the amounts in this section are available until June 30, 2021, if a binding agreement with a landowner or purchase agreement is entered into by June 30, 2020, and closed no later than June 30, 2021. Appropriations for restoration or enhancement are available until June 30, 2022, or five years after acquisition, whichever is later, so that initial restoration or enhancement work can be completed. If a project receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds, the appropriation period may be extended to equal the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years, provided the federal funding was confirmed and included in the first draft accomplishment plan. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public use facilities must have no more than a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$136,000	-	-	\$136,000
Contracts	\$42,000	-	-	\$42,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$2,009,500	\$2,366,000	Washington County; Landowner	\$4,375,500
Easement Stewardship	\$72,000	-	-	\$72,000
Travel	\$4,000	-	-	\$4,000
Professional Services	\$150,000	-	-	\$150,000
Direct Support Services	\$37,000	-	-	\$37,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$7,500	-	-	\$7,500
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$2,458,000	\$2,366,000	-	\$4,824,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Protection and Legal Staff	0.17	5.0	\$136,000	-	-	\$136,000

Amount of Request: \$2,458,000

Amount of Leverage: \$2,366,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 96.26%

DSS + Personnel: \$173,000

As a % of the total request: 7.04%

Easement Stewardship: \$72,000

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 3.58%

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?

The program was funded at 46% of its requested amount. We intend to complete the project as designed through additional leverage from program partners, and existing OHF grants to the Land Trust (Metro Big Rivers 5, 6 and 7), with outcomes split proportionately among the grants.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Washington County and the landowner are committing to the procurement of leverage to enable the project to move forward.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?

No.

Easement Stewardship

What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?

-

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:

No

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?

Like all conservation entities, the Minnesota Land Trust has direct support expenses which are essential to complete a conservation project, which include such costs as administrative support staff, office space, printing and office supplies. This proposal accounts for these critical expenses which are consistent with the Land Trust's current application for a federal indirect expense rate. However, we included only 50% of these direct support costs in this proposal, with the other 50% coming as leverage and paid for through the Land Trust's fundraising.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?

No

Output Tables**Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)**

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	369	0	369
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	369	0	369

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	\$2,458,000	-	\$2,458,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	\$2,458,000	-	\$2,458,000

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	369	0	0	0	0	369
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	369	0	0	0	0	369

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$2,458,000	-	-	-	-	\$2,458,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$2,458,000	-	-	-	-	\$2,458,000

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	\$6,661	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$6,661	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

4.6 miles

Parcels

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?

No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

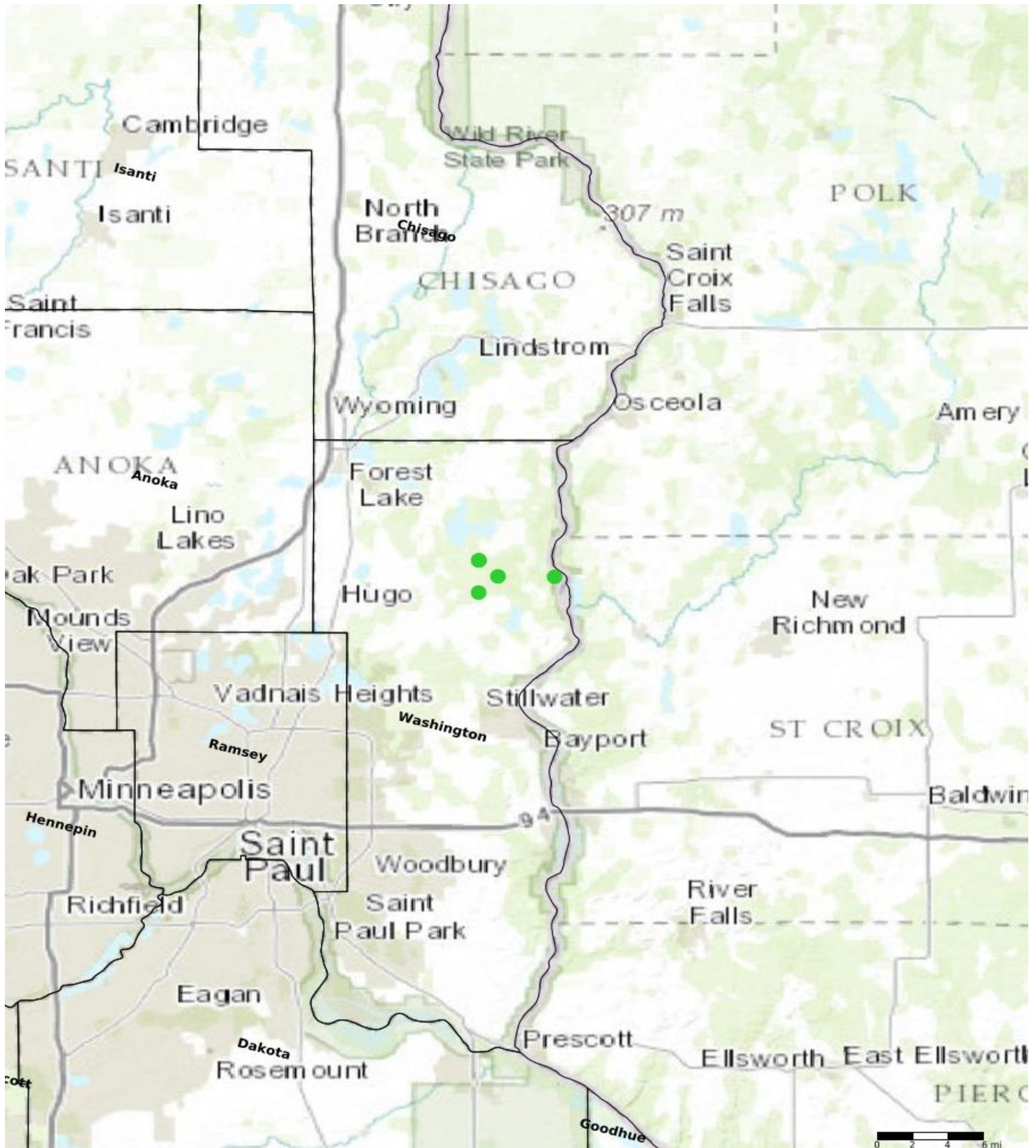
Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
MLT - Carnelian Creek	Washington	03120221	76	\$325,000	No
Maple Island (Bancroft)	Washington	03120209	39	\$589,000	No
Long Lake 2	Washington	03120209	80	\$1,300,000	No
Terrapin Lake	Washington	03120215	735	\$5,145,000	No

Protect Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
St. Croix - Marine 2	Washington	03119218	133	\$1,500,000	Yes	Proposed	-

Parcel Map



- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✕ Enhance
- ⊕ Other