



JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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For immediate release: January 11, 2012

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JEFFERSON COUNTY INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR OPEN SPACE PROJECTS

Port Townsend, WA. January 11, 2012 – 2012 marks the 10th anniversary for the Conservation Futures Program. In partnership with citizens, local non-profit organizations and governments, this County-based grant program provides funding for the protection of important open space lands in Jefferson County in order to benefit the health and welfare of citizens and visitors.

Open spaces include wildlife habitat, farms, timberlands, trail right-of-ways, scenic areas, and cultural sites. These areas may provide important functions such as:

- Providing safe passage for native wildlife,
- Conserving or enhancing natural or cultural resources,
- helping to maintain a natural flood water control system,
- Protecting existing habitat, water quality, water supply and soils,
- Enhancing or protecting scenic views,
- Providing opportunities for outdoor education and non-motorized recreation, and
- Ensuring that future generations realize the benefits derived from maintaining a balanced natural system.

Commissioner John Austin is encouraged by the accomplishments of the program and its partnerships so far, “The Conservation Futures Program is a wonderful tool for our community.”

The Conservation Futures Fund supports the purchase of land or development rights through an application process guided by the Section 3.08 of the Jefferson County Code and overseen by the Conservation Futures Citizen Oversight Committee. The program is funded by the County’s smallest property tax levy and staffed by the Environmental Health Department. Funding decisions are made by the Board of County Commissioners after the project applications have been vetted and ranked by the Conservation Futures Citizen Oversight Committee and a public hearing is held.

Project sponsors are required to provide a matching contribution of at least 50% of the project’s cost in the form of non-County grant funds, private contributions, or the value of other open space linked to the project. Citizens, landowners, and citizen groups as well as local government agencies, special purpose districts, and non-profit corporations within Jefferson County may apply for funds in partnership, as needed, with an eligible sponsor. Committee Chair Fred

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Weinmann encourages all interested individuals and organizations to learn more about the program. “The Conservation Futures program is the only publicly funded program created for the sole purpose of protecting open spaces in Jefferson County – so if you know of a favorite forest or farm or green space that deserves protection please contact the County. It may be easier than you think!” he says.

Past and current conservation futures projects include:

- A total of 21 acres of wildlife habitat along Chimacum Creek and its estuary
- Conservation easements to help maintain the Sunfield, Glendale and Finnriver Farms, and the Chimacum Dairy property in agriculture
- Forested acreage in the Tarboo Creek watershed
- Protections for Tamanowas Rock and the surrounding area
- Parcels within the Quimper Wildlife Corridor and “Cappy’s Trails” area

In 2012, it’s estimated that \$260,000 will be available to fund new projects. Completed applications must be received by Jefferson County Environmental Health no later than Monday, March 5, 2012. Program staff, Tami Pokorny, invites interested individuals and groups to contact her to arrange in-person meetings or workshops to discuss the program and ideas for new projects. “I’m available to help with the application process and to answer questions about the program any time of year,” she says.

For an application and more information, or to schedule a meeting or program workshop, contact Tami Pokorny at 379-4498 or email tpokorny@co.jefferson.wa.us . Visit the Jefferson County Conservation Futures Program web pages at www.co.jefferson.wa.us/commissioners .