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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JEFFERSON COUNTY INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR OPEN SPACE PROJECTS

Port Townsend, WA – Jefferson County welcomes applications to protect important open space lands through the county's Conservation Futures Program.

Open space lands provide important functions including:

- Protecting wildlife habitat and corridors,
- Conserving cultural resources,
- Maintaining natural flood water control,
- Protecting water quality, water supply and soils,
- Enhancing or protecting scenic views,
- Providing opportunities for education and passive recreation, and
- Perpetuating the benefits of balanced and productive natural systems.

Citizens, landowners, citizen groups, local government agencies, special purpose districts, and non-profit corporations within Jefferson County may apply for funds in partnership, as applicable, with a local sponsoring organization based in Jefferson County.

In the 2020 funding cycle, approximately \$235,000 is available to new projects. Of this amount, up to approximately \$41,000 is available to reimburse operations and maintenance expenses for any property acquired with the Conservation Futures Fund. A minimum matching amount of 50% of the total project cost is required of the project sponsor. Sources of match must be non-county funds such as private contributions, state and/or federal grants, and/or the value of other open space lands linked to the project.

The **deadline to submit applications is Friday, March 27, 2020**. For an application and more information, contact Tami Pokorny at (360) 379-4498 or tpokorny@co.jefferson.wa.us.

Last year, the Board of County Commissioners approved the use of the Conservation Futures Fund towards the completion of three projects. These included the acquisition of conservation easements on

eighty acres of agricultural land along Jakeway Creek north of Quilcene, and on 21 acres of mature forest along Center Road containing a tributary to Tarboo Creek. The third project is to purchase two shoreline parcels along the Dosewallips River upstream of Brinnon for restoration of salmon habitat.

The annual project application process is governed by the Conservation Futures Citizen Oversight Committee. Each spring, this committee evaluates project applications for their public benefit and makes recommendations to the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners who, after a public hearing, decide which projects merit funding. Meetings of the Committee are open to the public.

The Conservation Futures Fund (Fund) and Program are governed by Section 3.08 of the Jefferson County Code. The Program was created in 2002 to help ensure that the county retains adequate wildlife habitat, working farms and forests, scenic areas, and culturally and historically significant open space lands here – all for the health, benefit and welfare of citizens. Funds are made available through the County's smallest property tax levy.

Presentations about the program and past projects are available throughout the year by request to the Environmental Public Health Department. Visit the Conservation Futures Program and Committee web pages at www.co.jefferson.wa.us/commissioners/Conservation/conservation.asp.

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Jefferson County Public Health
Always Working for a Safer and Healthier Community