



February 13, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

**SUBJECT: Support for City of Olympia's Application for the National Estuary Program Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant**

This letter is in support of the City of Olympia's application for a National Estuary Program (NEP) Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant.

On January 2, 2014, Storm and Surface Water Utility staff presented the City of Olympia Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) with a Habitat and Stewardship Strategy, in response to a specific 2012 UAC request to better address and implement aquatic habitat enhancements in the City. The UAC request was subsequently supported by the Olympia Planning Commission and City Council.

The resulting Strategy consolidates and updates several other studies that have been developed over the past 20 years related to aquatic habitat conservation in the City of Olympia. It uses a watershed-based framework to identify and prioritize sustainable riparian habitat acquisition and restoration needs throughout the Storm and Surface Water Utilities Service area (the City of Olympia and its UGA). The Strategy was well received and is supported by the UAC.

The Strategy prioritizes the Green Cove basin in northwest Olympia. The basin is unique and has a history of natural resource study and protection work. It was the focus of extensive work in 1998-2001 to create one of the first comprehensive environmentally-based zoning districts in the Puget Sound region. The zoning district, which put many development requirements in place, continues to be implemented. Green Cove basin also encompasses the City-owned, 245-acre Grass Lakes wetland refuge, extensive neighborhood-owned green belts, and land trust conservation easements. It is the home of chinook, coho, chum, steelhead, sea-run cutthroat trout, western brook lamprey and Olympic mud-minnows.

The recently-completed Habitat and Stewardship Strategy identified the need for active stewardship across the entire Green Cove landscape to lessen the ongoing indirect effects of urbanization (e.g. invasive species, yard waste dumping, buffer encroachments) and to help reverse the effects of legacy land management practices including logging, land clearing, and grazing. We propose using the grant to implement an integrated watershed protection and restoration strategy within the Green Cove Basin.

Specifically, the grant proposes the development and implementation of a comprehensive suite of stewardship tools designed to restore aquatic and riparian habitat on a multitude of properties of varying size and land use classification, exclusively within the high quality Green Cove Basin. The work has identified 14 potential partnerships, representing 704 acres of land already in some level of protection status (e.g., government, homeowner open space tracts). Also identified are approximately 250 residential properties that are directly adjacent to habitat in the basin. Other partnerships are available and will be developed with neighborhoods and individual property owners.

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On behalf of the Utility Advisory Committee, I respectfully submit this letter in support of the City of Olympia's application for National Estuary Program Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thad Curtz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

**THAD CURTZ**

Chair

Utility Advisory Committee