

PROPOSED LAND TRANSACTIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Decision Page.....		i
Budget Page.....		ii
Proposed Acquisition	Grand Coulee Ranch LLC Property	
	Douglas County	2
Highways Map		2a
GIS Aerial Map		2b
GIS Aerial Map		2c
Wenatchee World Article.....		2d
Proposed Acquisition	Grass Island LLC. Property	
	Grays Harbor County	3
Highways Map		3a
GIS Aerial Map		3b
GIS Aerial Map		3c
Proposed Transfer	Fortson Ponds. Property	
	Snohomish County	4
Highways Map		4a
GIS Aerial Map		4b
GIS Aerial Map		4c
Stillaguamish Tribe Letter.....		4d

Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: September 26 & 27 , 2014
Agenda item: PROPOSED LAND TRANSACTIONS
Presenter(s): Julie Sandberg

Background summary:

The Department is recommending the following actions:

- Item 2 – Proposed Acquisition of 4,198 (+/-) acres in Douglas County
 - Item 3 – Proposed Acquisition of 131.8 acres in Grays Harbor County
 - Item 4 – Proposed Transfer of 54 acres in Snohomish County
-

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

Protecting critical fish and wildlife habitat, providing public recreational opportunity, and responsible property management.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Item 2 – This acquisition is part of the Mid-Columbia / Grand Coulee Project funded by the Recreation and Conservation Office through a competitive grant process. The project was evaluated and approved through the Lands 20/20 process. This project received broad support including the support of the Douglas County Commissioners.

Item 3 - This acquisition of 131.8 acres is funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Migratory Waterfowl funding..

Item 4 –The Stillaguamish Tribe is committed to managing this site for Coho broodstock collection and public access.

Action requested:

Approval of the proposed land transactions as presented.

Draft motion language:

Move to approve the proposed land transactions as presented.

Justification for Commission action:

This action will provide protection for critical fish and wildlife habitat, provide public recreational opportunity, and address responsible property management.

Communications Plan:

WDFW will provide a press release informing the public of this action and proceed forward to closing these transactions.

**Budget Detail for September 26 & 27, 2014 Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting
Land Acquisition Agenda Item**

Item	Acres	Purchase Price	Project Name	*Fund Source	Approp. Authority	Approp. Balance	Original Grant Amount	Pre Action Grant Balance	**Post Action Grant Balance
Grand Coulee	4,198.45	\$ 1,805,000.00	Mid-Columbia / Grand Coulee 2012	WWRP	Z41	\$ -	\$ 1,950,000.00	\$ 1,900,588.00	\$ 41,438.00
Grass Island	131.8	\$ 108,000.00	Grass Island Acquisition	USFWS-NAWCA	P22	#REF!	\$ 47,000.00	\$ 47,000.00	\$ -
			Grass Island Acquisition	Migatory Waterfowl	S09	\$ 95,381.00	\$ 104,000.00	\$ 87,368.00	\$ 23,128.00

USFWS NAWCA = United States Fish & Wildlife Service-North American Wetland Conservation Act
RCO -WWRP= Recreation Conservation Office - Washington Wildlife Recreation Program

** Post Action Grant Balance

The reduction in the grant balance includes anticipated closing costs such as taxes, escrow fees and title insurance.

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
WILDLIFE PROGRAM
LANDS DIVISION
REAL ESTATE SERVICES**

September 26, 2014

TO: Philip Anderson
Director

FROM: Julie Sandberg
Real Estate Services Manager

SUBJECT: ITEM 2: PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF THE GRAND COULEE RANCH, LLC PROPERTY PHASE 1, GRAND COULEE UNIT, WELLS WILDLIFE AREA, DOUGLAS COUNTY.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has successfully negotiated an option to purchase in multi-year phases the 20,571-acre Grand Coulee Ranch, LLC property in Douglas County. This property will be acquired as part of the Columbia-Grand Coulee 2012 project which was evaluated and approved through the Lands 20/20 process. This project is being funded by a grant from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and authority for this acquisition is provided by the capital budget. This proposal is for the acquisition of Phase 1 of this property.

This property is located approximately 5 miles northwest of the town of Grand Coulee. The property has over 14 miles of frontage on the Columbia River and contains unique characteristics of basalt cliffs and low buttes that overlook the river, gently rolling hills, steep riparian draws and aspen stands, and rugged slopes filled with Ponderosa pine that reach down to the river's edge. It provides significant shrub steppe habitat occupied by Columbian sharp-tailed grouse.

This project provides an important connectivity link within sharp-tailed grouse populations in Douglas County and between populations in adjacent counties as well as other at-risk shrub steppe dependent species inhabiting this project area.

The property will be managed within the Wildlife Program as part of the Grand Coulee Unit, Wells Wildlife Area. Management of the property includes opportunity for hunting and fishing for the public. Operation and maintenance cost are anticipated to be \$33,600 annually to address weed control and litter issues. Payment in lieu of property taxes are estimated at \$4,200.

The Department has secured an option to purchase the Phase 1 property at the reviewed and approved appraised value of:

4,198.45 acres for \$1,805,000

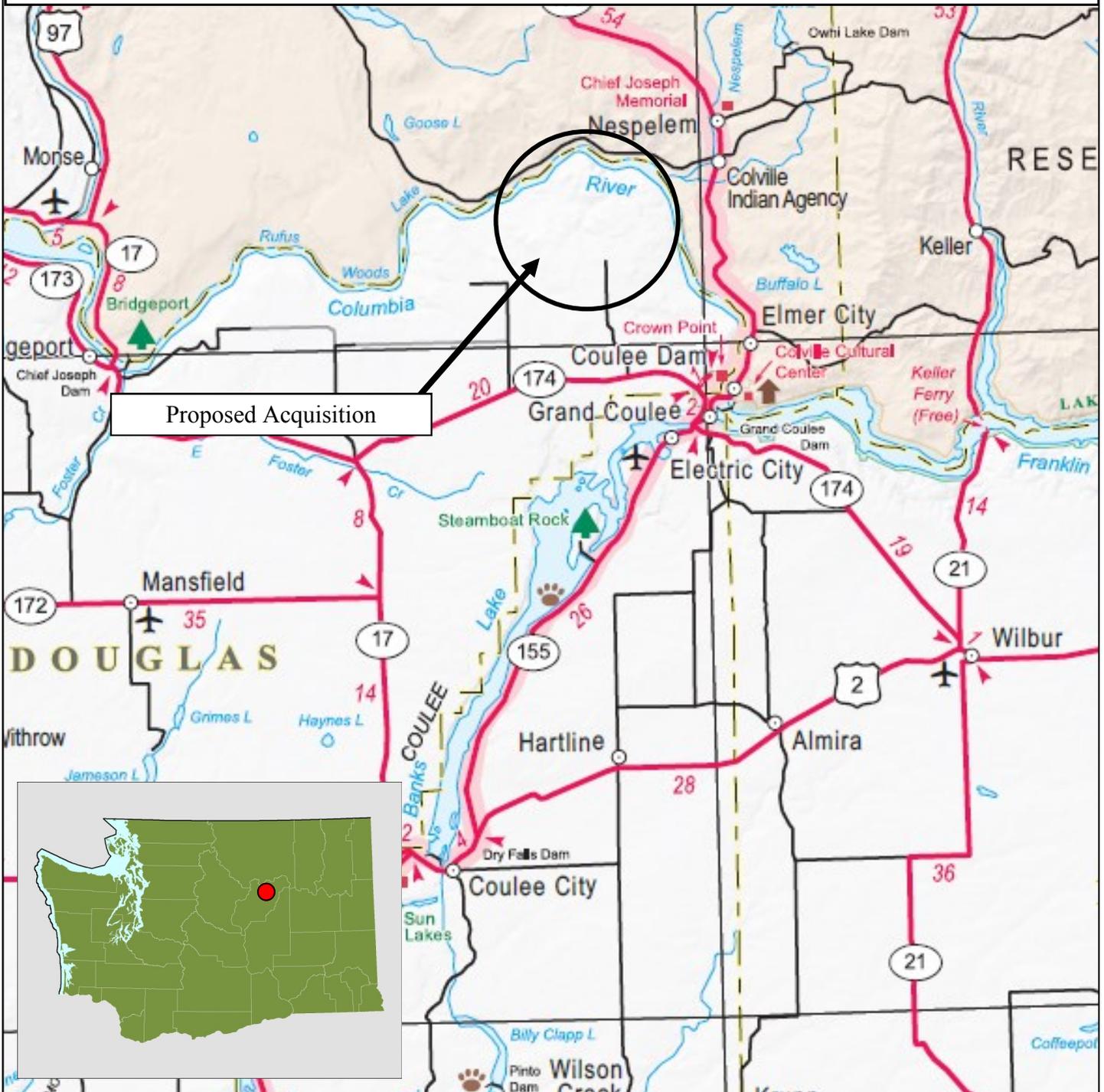
The Department recommends the Commission approve the acquisition of the Grand Coulee Ranch LLC Phase 1 property of 4,198.45 (+/-) acres for \$1,805,000.

**ITEM 2: PROPOSED ACQUISITION
GRAND COULEE RANCH LLC PROPERTY PHASE I**

COUNTY: DOUGLAS COUNTY

**LEGAL: SECTIONS 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 14, & 15, T30N, R29E, W.M.
SECTIONS 34 & 35, T31N, R29E, W.M.**

ACRES: 4, 198 (+/-)

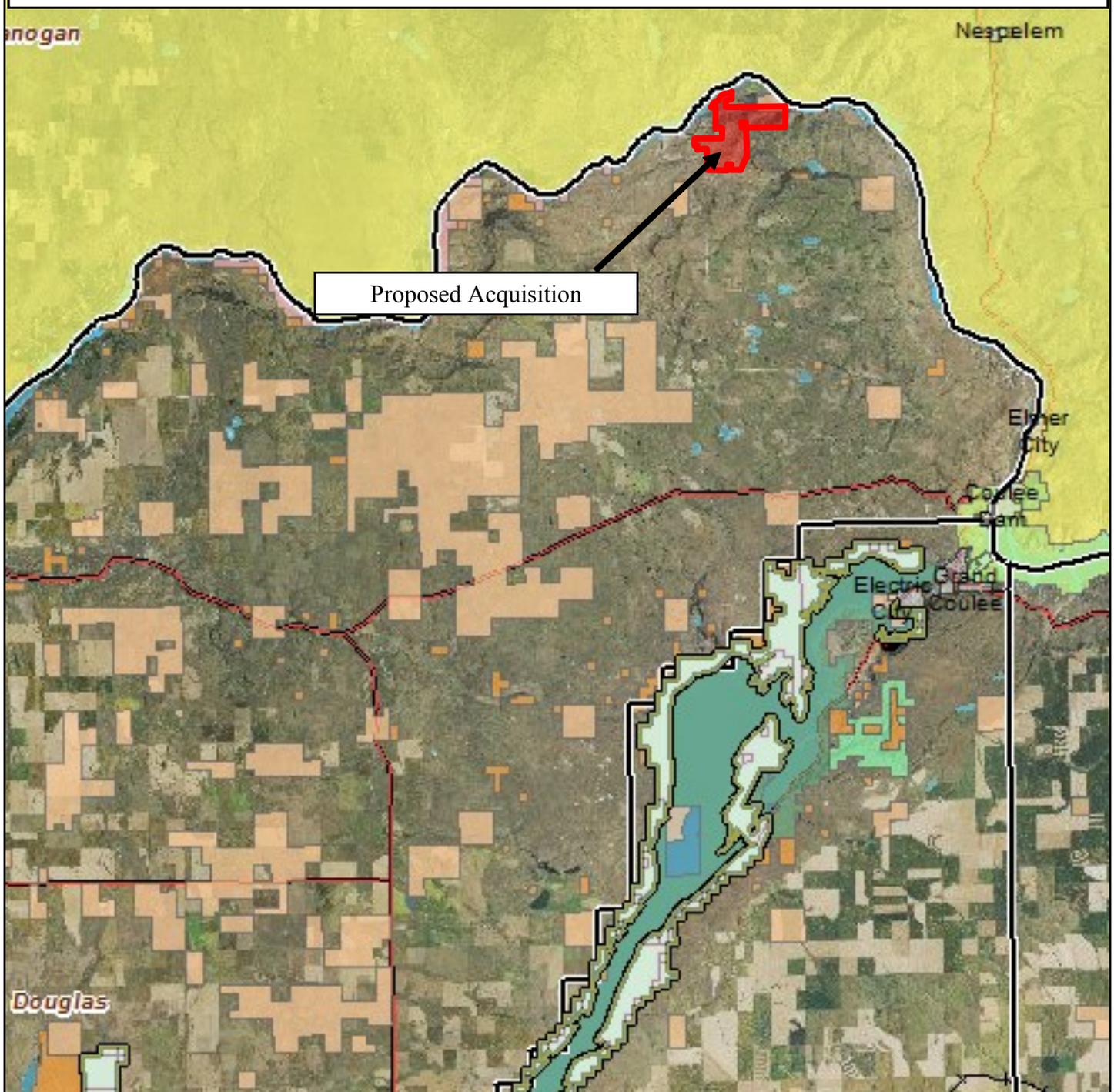


**ITEM 2: PROPOSED ACQUISITION
GRAND COULEE RANCH LLC PROPERTY PHASE I**

COUNTY: DOUGLAS COUNTY

**LEGAL: SECTIONS 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 14, & 15, T30N, R29E, W.M.
SECTIONS 34 & 35, T31N, R29E, W.M.**

ACRES: 4, 198 (+/-)

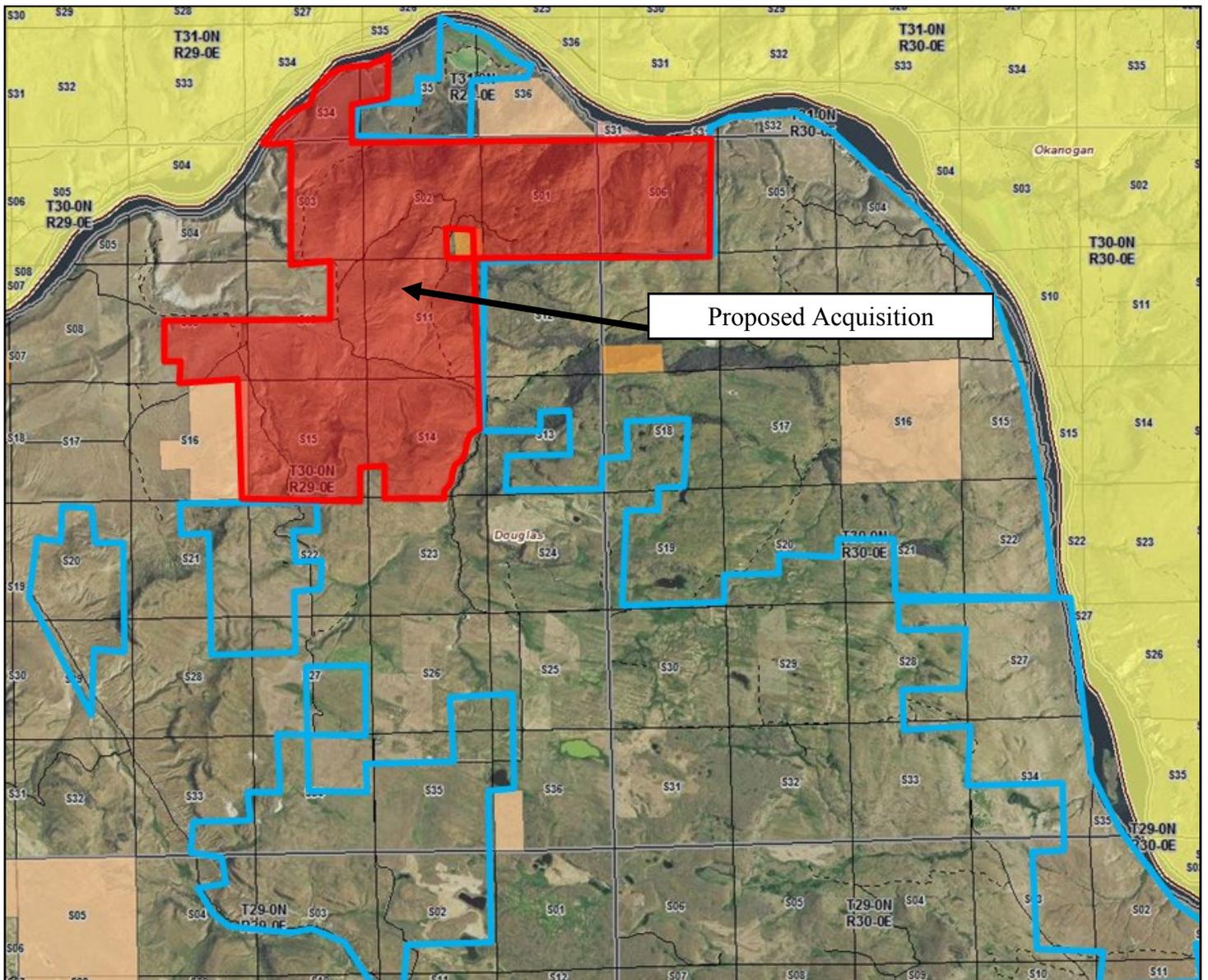


**ITEM 2: PROPOSED ACQUISITION
GRAND COULEE RANCH LLC PROPERTY PHASE I**

COUNTY: DOUGLAS COUNTY

**LEGAL: SECTIONS 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 14, & 15, T30N, R29E, W.M.
SECTIONS 34 & 35, T31N, R29E, W.M.**

ACRES: 4, 198 (+/-)



Land acquisition discussion coming to East Wenatchee

by K.C. Mehaffey, [Wenatchee World](#)

April 23, 2014, 8:45 a.m.

If you go

What: Okanogan County Farm Bureau presentation on land acquisition

When: 6 p.m., May 5

Where: Bethel Baptist Church, 1354 Eastmont Ave., East Wenatchee

EAST WENATCHEE — Douglas County commissioners are defending their support of a state land buy near Grand Coulee, saying they expect the public benefit from new fishing and hunting opportunities to far outweigh lost tax revenue.

Their defense comes in the wake of an April 3 presentation by the Okanogan County Farm Bureau in Winthrop about the importance of private property ownership, and how state land purchases have changed Okanogan County. Another presentation is planned in East Wenatchee on May 5.

Douglas County commissioners say they support the state Department of Fish and Wildlife's plan to buy the 20,500-acre Grand Coulee Ranch, including a 4,100-acre piece already approved by the state and scheduled for purchase this year. Before supporting it, they ensured that the property would remain open to grazing.

Regional Wildlife director Jim Brown said the land is being acquired to protect sharp-tail grouse and to provide public access for recreation, particularly to the Columbia River and Rufus Woods Lake.

Commissioners Steve Jenkins and Dale Snyder say they understand why land acquisition is an issue in Okanogan County. "But we're totally different than Okanogan County — just the opposite," said Jenkins. "We're losing all our land to people who are buying it privately and locking it off to the public. We need some areas in Douglas County that are open to the public," he said.

Snyder said the 20,500-acre parcel — if the entire piece is eventually purchased — brings in just over \$3,000 a year in taxes to the county, and a little over \$4,100 in taxes to other taxing districts, like schools. Those taxes would just be shifted to other property owners. "It's disingenuous to say the county and schools will lose tax revenue, because they won't," he said.

And, both commissioners said, the added bird and deer hunting and fishing opportunities has the potential for bringing recreation to a largely unvisited part of the county.

Jenkins said full purchase would open access to a 15-mile stretch of the Columbia River. "We're not going to lose any money," he said.

Frances Dinger, a spokeswoman for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition which supports the acquisition, said several studies have shown the economic benefits that outdoor recreation brings. Statewide, she said, it generates some \$22.5 billion in retail revenue, 227,000 jobs and \$1.6 billion in

state and local tax revenue. Hunting adds another \$1.6 billion in retail sales, and \$159 million in taxes, she said.

Jenkins added that as a private property rights advocate, he would not stand in the way of a landowner who wants to sell to a government agency, unless the planned use for that property was clearly a detriment to the public.

Fish and Wildlife officials say the agency only buys property from willing sellers.

Jon Wyss, president of the Okanogan County Farm Bureau, said his presentation was never intended to be critical of the Grand Coulee Ranch purchase.

Developed from a report the Farm Bureau did in 2009, the presentation's main message is that the economic impact of land acquisitions should be fully evaluated before they're approved, he said.

"The one thing about the presentation that gets misconstrued is that we outright oppose every government land acquisition or every conservation easement. That's not the case," he said.

He said he doesn't know whether the Grand Coulee Ranch land purchase is economically beneficial. "I haven't done that work, and the commissioners could be right. I just don't know," he said.

Wyss said the presentation is centered on how land acquisition has impacted Okanogan County, showing a 50-year history of land buys. "There are two slides that deal with national acquisitions, one that deals with the city of Wenatchee, one that deals with Grand Coulee Ranch, and 40 that deal with Okanogan County," he said, adding, "All we're doing is providing information."

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
WILDLIFE PROGRAM
LANDS DIVISION
REAL ESTATE SERVICES**

September 26, 2014

TO: Philip Anderson
Director

FROM: Julie Sandberg
Real Estate Services Manager

**SUBJECT: ITEM 3: PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF GRASS ISLAND, LLC
PROPERTY, ELK RIVER UNIT, JOHNS RIVER WILDLIFE AREA,
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY.**

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is negotiating an option to purchase a 131.8-acre parcel consisting of a 35-acre island and the surrounding tideland. The property provides habitat to a diverse group of wildlife species including several anadromous fish, marine mammals, shorebirds, wading birds, waterfowl and other wetland dependent species. This project was evaluated and approved through the 2013 Lands 20/20 process. The project will be funded by a grant from the USFWS and Migratory Waterfowl fund.

This property is located in Grays Harbor County, approximately 1 mile south and east of the town of Westport and within the Chehalis River Basin and the Elk River estuary. The island itself is dry during all tide stages and has a small portion that at one time contained a recreational cabin. The vegetative cover consists mainly of wetland shrubs and grasses. The most current use of the island has been for waterfowl hunting.

The purpose of the project is to protect the 131.8 acres and allow waterfowl hunting opportunities for the public from the island. The project provides additional protection for areas near the Elk River Natural Resource Conservation Area which are important resting and feeding habitat for waterfowl and shore birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway.

The property will be managed within the Wildlife Program as part of the Elk River Unit, Johns River Wildlife Area. Management of the property includes opportunity for hunting and fishing for the public. Operation and maintenance cost for this property are estimated to be \$1,056 and our partners from Ducks Unlimited have agreed to participate in the maintenance.

The Department has secured an option to purchase this property at the reviewed and approved appraised value of:

131.8 acres for \$108,000

The Department recommends the Commission approve the acquisition of the 131 (+/-) acres from Grass Island, LLC for \$108,000.

**ITEM 3: PROPOSED ACQUISITION
GRASS ISLAND LLC PROPERTY**

COUNTY: GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

LEGAL: SECTION 18, T 16 N, R 11 W, W.M.

ACRES: 131 (+/-)

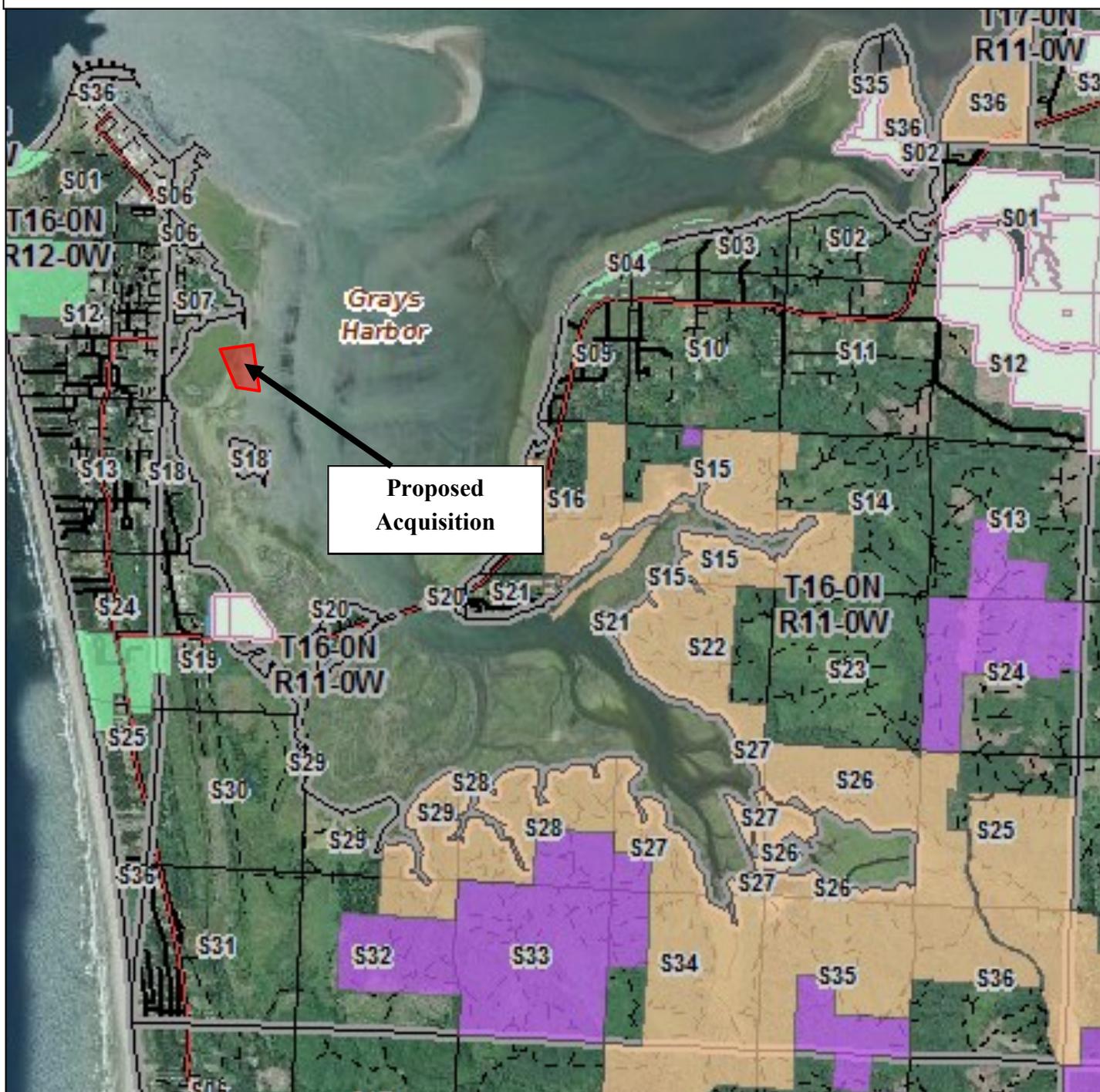


**ITEM 3: PROPOSED ACQUISITION
GRASS ISLAND LLC PROPERTY**

COUNTY: GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

LEGAL: SECTION 18, T 16 N, R 11 W, W.M.

ACRES: 131 (+/-)



**ITEM 3: PROPOSED ACQUISITION
GRASS ISLAND LLC PROPERTY**

COUNTY: GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

LEGAL: SECTION 18, T 16 N, R 11 W, W.M.

ACRES: 131 (+/-)



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
WILDLIFE PROGRAM
LANDS DIVISION
REAL ESTATE SERVICES**

September 26, 2014

TO: Philip Anderson,
Director

FROM: Julie Sandberg
Real Estate Services Manager

**SUBJECT: ITEM 4: PROPOSED TRANSFER OF LAND
STILLAGUAMISH TRIBE
FORTSON PONDS, SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has received a request from the Stillaguamish Tribe to transfer ownership of approximately 54 acres of land between State Route 530 and the North Fork Stillaguamish River, west of Darrington. The land is known as Fortson Ponds. It was purchased in 1999 with a grant from the Critical Habitat portion of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) for the purpose of coho rearing and public access to the river.

Due to budget cuts to the Fish Passage Section of the Agency, WDFW has not been able to manage the site for about ten years. The Tribe has been using the site to capture Coho broodstock for their US/Canada wild stock indicator program. WDFW does not have a Coho program on the Stillaguamish River.

The Tribe is committed to continue managing the site for Coho broodstock collection and public access. Fortson Ponds is contiguous with a tribally-owned parcel immediately downstream. The Tribe has agreed to assume WDFW's obligations on the WWRP contract and has dedicated resources to maintaining and checking on the site regularly. The Tribe is in the midst of restoring instream and riparian habitat within this reach and feels it can provide more active stewardship of Fortson Ponds than WDFW has been able to.

WDFW has considered the Tribe's request and determined that the transfer proposal is beneficial to the department. It is an opportunity to assist in a partnership with the Tribe that has immediate and long-term benefits for fish and wildlife and public access to the North Fork Stillaguamish. With public access to the area increasing considerably, the transfer to the tribe will relieve WDFW of the responsibility to upgrade the site to meet minimal public access safety requirements and long term management of the site. The department believes that the transfer will result in more efficient and effective management of the site.

The department recommends that the Commission approve the transfer of this 54-acre parcel of land to the Stillaguamish Tribe.

**ITEM 4: PROPOSED TRANSFER
FORTSON PONDS PROPERTY**

COUNTY: SNOHOMISH COUNTY

LEGAL: SECTION 11, T 32 N, R 8 E, W.M.

ACRES: 54 (+/-)

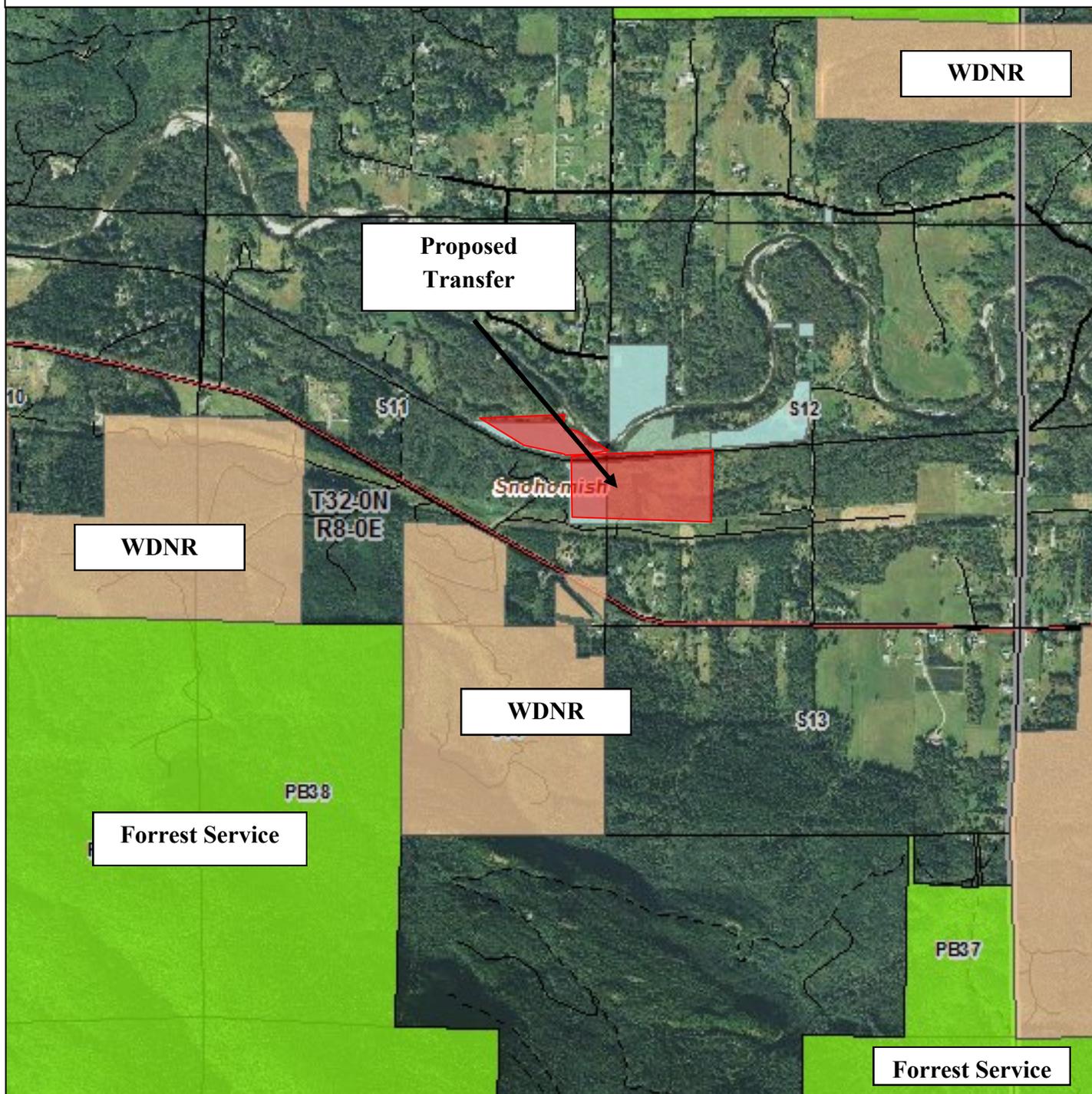


**ITEM 4: PROPOSED TRANSFER
FORTSON PONDS PROPERTY**

COUNTY: SNOHOMISH COUNTY

LEGAL: SECTION 11, T 32 N, R 8 E, W.M.

ACRES: 54 (+/-)

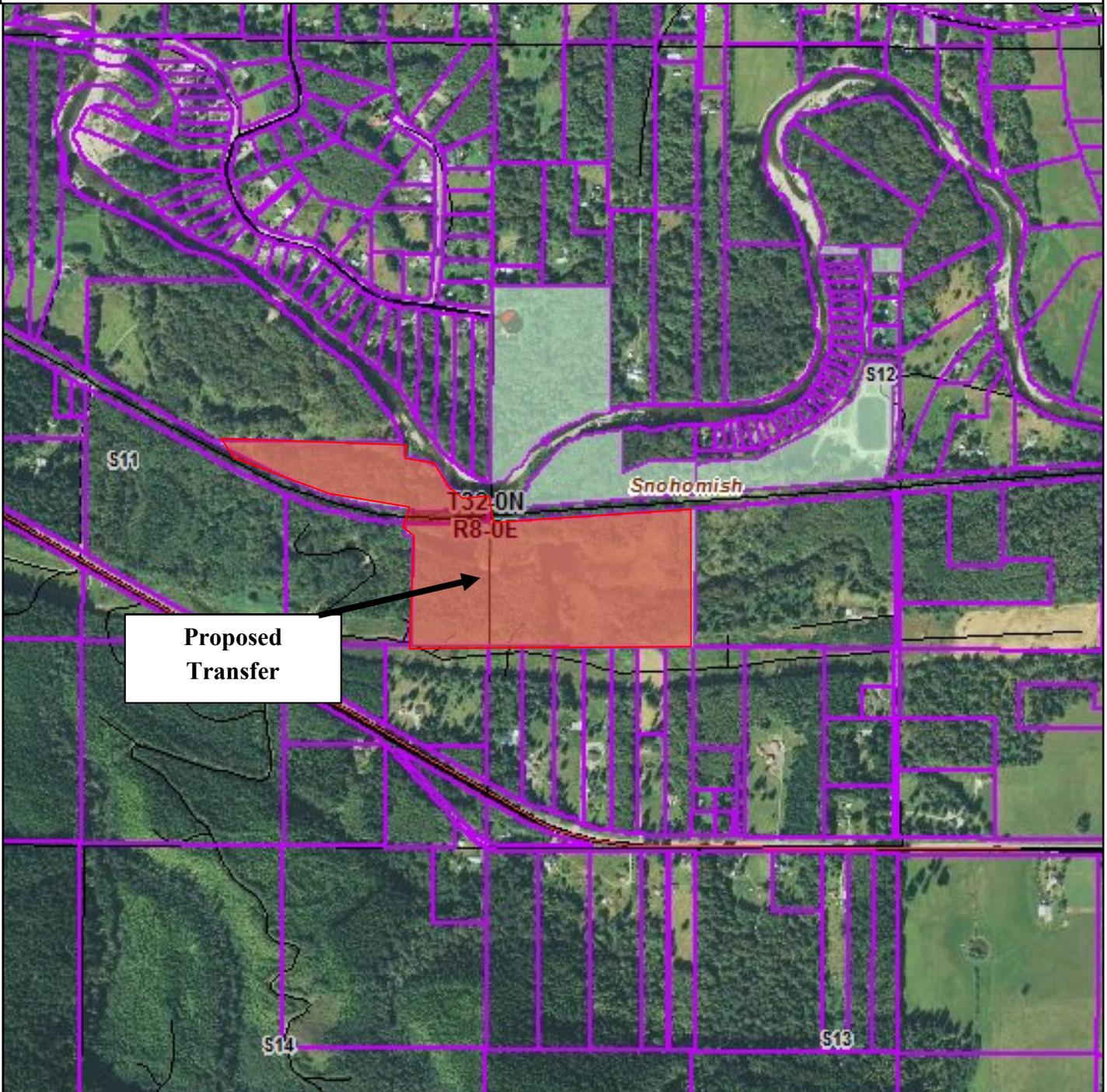


**ITEM 4: PROPOSED TRANSFER
FORTSON PONDS PROPERTY**

COUNTY: SNOHOMISH COUNTY

LEGAL: SECTION 11, T 32 N, R 8 E, W.M.

ACRES: 54 (+/-)



Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians

PO Box 277
3310 Smokey Point Drive
Arlington WA 98223

RECEIVED

SEP 12 2014

FISH AND
WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Miranda Wecker, Chair
Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission
600 Capitol Way N.
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

RE: Fortson Ponds- Sponsor Change Amendment Request for RCO # 92-810

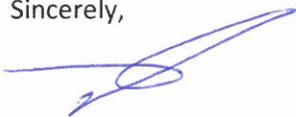
Dear Ms. Wecker-

The Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians has been approached by local WDFW staff to assume the Sponsor role of RCO project #92-810, known as Fortson Ponds. We understand that WDFW has been challenged to provide stewardship of the parcels in recent years, and is looking for another governmental organization to take over the management of this site. The Tribe owns a conservation parcel immediately downstream of Fortson and we have been working for years to restore the instream and riparian habitats along this reach. We have field crews that work in and around the parcels frequently throughout the year and have a good working relationship with Snohomish County Parks, whose Whitehorse Trail bisects the site. We have the resources and desire to steward this site going forward, and make a commitment to do so, if the Commission approves of the transfer to the Tribe.

In the last few months, our legal staff has worked with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to craft a Special Condition addendum to the RCO agreement that is amenable to the Tribe. In part, it states that the Tribe will allow public access to the North Fork Stillaguamish and that we will continue to support special fishing events at the Fortson Ponds, such as a youth fishing derby. We formally request that the Commission allow the RCO to change the sponsor on RCO #92-810 from WDFW to the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians.

Thank you for considering this matter, and please contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Ted Wright
Executive Director