



October 2, 2024

Washington State Department of Ecology
300 Desmond Dr SE
Lacey, WA 98503

RE: Cougar Creek Enhancement Grant Proposal

Dear Chanele Holbrook, Stephanie Herbst, David Mora and Nathan Woods:

The Clark County Clean Water Commission's mission is to work with our community and leadership to improve and protect Clark County watersheds from the impacts of stormwater runoff, point and non-point pollution sources, and other risks to the ecological integrity and quality of our surface water resources.

The Clean Water Commission strives to achieve healthy watersheds throughout Clark County and to ensure the integrity of the water cycle, as defined by commonly accepted best standards. With our mission in mind, the Clean Water Commission strongly supports Clark County's Cougar Creek Enhancement grant proposal, which will enhance salmon recovery through the protection and restoration of fully functioning riparian ecosystems. "Riparian projects" are defined as those projects that change the riparian areas above the ordinary high-water mark and within the floodplain of streams to improve the environmental conditions necessary to sustain salmonids throughout their life cycle. This includes marine nearshore, estuaries, wetlands, and lakeshores of connected lakes.

An enhanced riparian zone together with the in-stream habitat creation will provide the following restoration benefits in this important watershed for salmon recovery:

- Re-establishing natural floodplain functions and increasing the potential for high quality wetland and riparian habitat to develop due to the improved hydraulic complexity and elevated groundwater table.
- Reducing future fine sediment loading by halting bed incision, stabilizing banks, and promoting sediment deposition throughout the design reach.
- Improving in-stream habitat for aquatic and riparian species by creating cover and refuge habitat, as well as providing a source of nutrients.

This project addresses these strategies while also incorporating aspects of the Clark County's Cougar Creek Enhancement grant proposal to the primary goal is to restore riparian function by reconnecting Cougar creek to its flood plain and that this project will create environmental conditions to sustain salmonids throughout their life cycles.

We encourage you to approve this proposal since it will have a significant and lasting impact.

Sincerely,

Ted Gathe
Chair, Clean Water Commission
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cc: Jeff Schnabel
Chad Hoxeng
Marlena Milosevich
Devan Rostorfer
Clean Water Commissioners