Project Review Comments

PROJECT: 21-1130 A, Grays River Conservation Area

Sponsor: Columbia Land Trust Program: SALMON ST PROJ Status: Application Resubmitted

MEETING: Initial Review

Shared: 4/2/2021

Review Status: Needs more information

Considerations: Other

Topics	Comments
Review Panel Comments - Initial	
Questions (response required)	
	Please provide a map which defines the boundaries for the riparian, uplands and wetland noted in the acquisition metrics. Preferably this would be a LiDAR based map.
	Reply: It is attached.
General Comments (response not required)	
	Further maps showing fish resources and documented landslide areas would also be helpful. Very exciting and cost effective acquisition proposal. The restoration potential seems enormous.

PROJECT: 21-1130 A, Grays River Conservation Area

Sponsor: Columbia Land Trust Program: SALMON ST PROJ Status: Application Resubmitted

MEETING: LE Review

Shared: 4/16/2021

Topics	Comments
Lead Entity Comments	
Questions For Applicant	
	If not acquired and conserved, what is the threat to the onsite habitat and watershed processes that the property supports? Please identify any pending and planned applications for harvest. How might potential threats impact forest age structure?
	Reply: This project started because the landowner informed the Land Trust that they were planning a harvest over a majority of the Project Site and would need to improve and build roads on the Land Trust's Crazy Johnson Property to prepare for that harvest. The Grays Watershed is known for erosion prone soils and unstable slopes and high sediment loads from harvesting is a limiting factor for salmon in the Watershed. Harvesting in this area could bury the chum spawning habitat on Crazy Johnson Creek, the Grays 2D, and just downstream.
	Will property appraisals be completed before the final application materials are due in June?
	Reply: Restricted appraisal reports were completed in early June. One of the landowners of the original project declined the appraised value and the other accepted it. The Land Trust is moving forward with just the one landowner.
	Will public road and access to the West Fork Grays River be supported if the property is acquired? Provide details on planned public use in your PRISM application materials.
	Reply: The Land Trust is no longer acquiring the West Fork property but public use will be supported as part of this acquisition.
	Clarify why upland acquisition with SRFB dollars is necessary in addition to riparian and floodplain acquisition.
	Reply: The landowner is only willing to sell the entire property and because upland forest management and high sediment loads are such limiting
	Is information available that connects forest age class data to runoff and other processes in the Grays river watershed? Information on this would be a good addition to the PRISM application.
	Reply: Yes, the Grays River Watershed and Biological Assessment (2006) describes the connection between harvesting and runoff and the high sediment yields in the watershed. It concluded that mass wasting events from road building and harvesting has led to unprecedented sediment yields and is a limiting factor for salmon in the watershed. The Land Trust is also currently working on a VELMA model looking at different forest management regimes in the Grays Watershed and the impact on hydrology. We anticipate we will have results from that work later this year.
	Describe local, public support for the acquisition proposal.

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	Reply: The Columbia Land Trust presented this project to the Pacific and Wahkiakum County Commissioners and the Grays River Habitat Enhancement District and there was support for this acquisition. One main concern that we have heard from the community is ensuring the land is open for public access and recreation. The Land Trust will allow public access that is consistent with the habitat goals of the project. The Land Trust will also continue to pay property taxes on the property to support the County.
	Include maps showing land types, upland, riparian, and wetland acreage and critical habitats overlaid with Lidar imagery in the acquisition area in the PRISM application. This information will help reviewers match the proposal with the metrics supplied in PRISM.
	Reply: There is now a Lidar map with riparian acreages in the attachments.
	Clarify how acquisition will support future restoration needs in the project area. For instance, could acquisition leverage levee removal downstream, on the river right side, about two-tenths of a mile upstream of the mouth of the West Fork Grays River.
	Reply: The West Fork Property is no longer included in the acquisition but we anticipate future restoration work on the Fossil Creek Property will revolve around improving chum spawning habitat on Crazy Johnson and improving forest health.
General Comments	
	There is a hatchery intake on West Fork Grays at 2.6 mi; Chum are documented by WDFW up to about river mile 4.9. Upstream of this area there is about a quarter mile long canyon reach that is not surveyable. However, nice habitat is available upstream of this canyon reach, although WDFW has not documented any salmon upstream of the canyon reach, just trout.