



April 29, 2026

Recreation and Conservation Office
PO Box 40917
Olympia WA 98504-0917
Attention: Community Forest Program

Re: RCO Grant No. 26-1770 Acq – Kimball Creek Ancestral Forest

Dear Evaluation Committee:

The Mountaineers supports the Tulalip Foundation's request for funding from RCO's Community Forest Program towards the Kimball Creek Ancestral Forest acquisition. The Tulalip Foundation is dedicated to empowering the wellbeing of the Tulalip Reservation and surrounding community and is the project sponsor on behalf of the Tulalip Tribes.

The Mountaineers, based in Seattle, Washington and founded in 1906, is a nonprofit outdoor education, conservation, and recreation organization whose mission is "to enrich the community by helping people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond." The Mountaineers Books publishing division expands the mission internationally through award-winning publications including instructional guides, adventure narratives, and conservation photography.

More than 1,800 Mountaineers volunteers lead more than 4,000 outdoor education trips annually for our more than 17,000 members. Our youth programs provide over 15,000 opportunities each year for children to get outside.

We are a passionate, engaged, and knowledgeable community that cares about the outdoors, and protects the outdoor experience for current and future generations. We encourage the practice of mindful and respectful recreation on the ancestral lands of Native peoples and shared learning about the first stewards of our lands and waters.

The Tulalip Foundation and Tulalip Tribes Natural and Cultural Resource Department's Restoration, Acquisition and Stewardship (RAS) Program are seeking grant funds for the acquisition of the 600-acre Kimball Creek Ancestral Forest in the upper Skykomish watershed. The property is within Tulalip Tribes' ancestral lands and in Tulalip's primary "Usual and Accustomed Area" under the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott. Acquisition and protection of the property will advance the recovery and sustainability of natural resources of conservation and tribal importance. As pressure from development and climate change increases, it's important to leverage every opportunity to protect parcels like these for their conservation, recreation, and cultural values.



The Tulalip Foundation and Tulalip Tribes RAS Program have a strong track record of conservation success with completion of the Kellogg Marsh Cooperative Acquisition in 2024 and the Upper Pilchuck forestland acquisition in 2025. These joint acquisitions received grant funding from Snohomish County Conservation Futures and RCO's Salmon Recovery grants.

Preservation and restoration of the Kimball Creek Ancestral Forest will provide community-wide benefits by maintaining and enhancing water quality, cold-water sources for downstream salmon, and biodiverse habitat for regionally important fish and wildlife populations. Existing roads and trails provide non-motorized access through the property, which borders Temple Mountain and the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. Tulalip Tribes will oversee timber management, stewardship, tribal member traditional uses, and community access. Many Mountaineers programs utilize Washington's backcountry forests, including those protected by the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, and we appreciate land acquisitions that seek to build connectivity with currently protected public lands.

The Mountaineers appreciates the Tulalip Tribes and the Tulalip Foundation for pursuing the protection of the Kimball Creek Ancestral Forest, and we enthusiastically support the Tulalip Foundation's application to secure grant funding from RCO's Community Forest Program.

Sincerely,

Betsy Robblee

Conservation & Advocacy Director

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