

The Nature Conservancy opposes I-933—and you should, too

It's true: The Nature Conservancy of Washington has declared its opposition to Initiative 933, which is expected to appear on the statewide November ballot. We are urging our members and supporters to vote "no."

This is a dramatic step for the Conservancy. The Washington chapter has never officially taken such a stance before. After much discussion and study, our staff and board members decided that the potential threat to Washington's natural heritage posed by this initiative is too great to ignore. We had to speak out.

What is Initiative 933? In brief, I-933 concerns regulations on property use and development. It seeks to establish a "pay or waive" system whereby landowners and developers would receive money from taxpayers or be granted waivers to disregard existing regulations. Moreover, it would hamstring state and local government by forcing them to jump through an elaborate set of slow and expensive hoops when considering habitat protection and other important land-use issues.

Why is I-933 bad for Washington? It is designed to undermine past, current and future efforts to plan how we alter and manage our state in accordance with our shared values. I-933 proposes a major roll back of the land-use guidelines that communities have spent decades developing. It can effectively repeal much of the zoning across the state. This would be a disservice to future generations and our native species.

This initiative is actually quite radical. It would allow owners of "property" (a term not clearly defined in the measure) to sue for damages caused by community and government rules or ignore those rules completely—"pay or waive." It means that we'd either have to fork out money—more than state and local governments can afford—or accept scattershot development and all of the increased traffic, compromised water quality and shattered habitat that goes with it. We are also guaranteed myriad lawsuits at great public expense.

Here's another way to look at it. Land-use planning, environmental regulations, and financial incentives that are applied fairly are important complements to The Nature Conservancy's work. Good planning is the key to ensuring that hard-won dollars for conservation, both public and private, are used to achieve lasting results at important places in the most cost-effective ways.

I-933 is complex and seeks to alter much more than most people realize at first blush. For example, supporters describe the measure as going back 10 years, to regulations begun in 1996; but the initiative includes language to eliminate many forestland protections no matter when they began. On the other hand, the official 933 campaign makes frequent reference to eminent domain. This is misleading because the proposed initiative in no way addresses eminent domain, and Washington already has strong protections against abusive use of this action on the books.

The biggest funders of I-933 are from out-of-state and

To learn more about the official campaign against I-933 and to get involved, visit www.NOon933.org

are bankrolling similarly extreme measures in several other states this year. There appears to be a nationwide,

coordinated effort to dismantle zoning and land-use planning in order to tip the scales strongly in favor of irresponsible development.

The Conservancy is pragmatic. We own land in Washington—the nature preserves that so many have helped to protect and restore. We are concerned that our preserves could be harmed by incompatible uses on neighboring lands. Similarly, communities would face sudden, inappropriate development projects if they cannot pay someone to abide by community values and obey the rules.

Washington's land use system isn't perfect, but it has been tested and improved for many years. The Nature Conservancy continues to be a strong advocate for more private landowner conservation incentives. In the meantime, I-933 proposes to bankrupt the current system and usher in an era of rampant and uncontrolled development. Please join us in our opposition to this effort.

Federal opportunities: Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery & Ebey's Landing

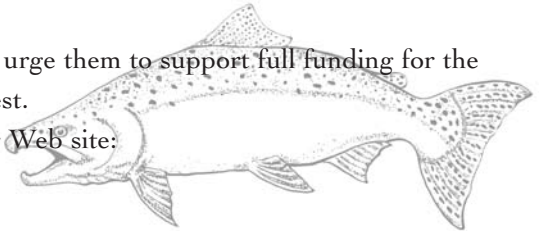
The Nature Conservancy continues to seek out and support potential federal efforts to preserve and restore Washington's rich natural heritage. While it's fair to say that federal funds for such activities have dwindled of late, there are still chances for citizens here at home to register their support for good ideas. Two such ideas are the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund and enhancing Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

The Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund recognizes the interest that the federal government and all Americans have in recovering struggling populations of wild salmon on the Pacific coast. The fund aids recovery efforts in Washington by supporting the state's Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB); the state of Washington matches this money. The SRFB accepts applications from organized watershed entities around the state and distributes grants to the most worthy projects for the sake of our native salmon.

At Ebey's Landing the National Park Service is seeking \$500,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to purchase an easement on Nature Conservancy property. The Conservancy in turn will use this money to establish a stewardship endowment for this Whidbey Island treasure. We supported this request last year but it was not funded, so we are trying again.

Take action! Please contact your U.S. Representative and Senators and urge them to support full funding for the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund and the Ebey's Landing LWCF request.

You can learn more about the government programs we support on our **Web site:** nature.org/Washington/friends. Or feel free to drop us a line. Thanks!



Moving Forward in the Tieton River Canyon

In 2003, the Nature Conservancy began raising public and private funds for the purchase of more than 10,000 acres near the Tieton River from Plum Creek Timber Co. Since then the Conservancy has purchased almost all of those acres, transferring much of that land to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). This means large swaths of the Tieton Canyon are, for the first time, almost entirely in public or conservation ownership.

In May the Conservancy signed an agreement with WDFW, the U.S. Forest Service and the state Department of Natural Resources—the major land managers in the Tieton—forming the Tieton Forest Collaborative.

The collaborative provides a way for its members to concentrate on their individual missions while planning and working across ownership boundaries on a number of specific, mutual goals. The scale of the Tieton Forest Collaborative is unprecedented in Eastern Washington, covering an area of nearly 200,000 publicly owned acres.

This new collaborative is particularly significant because of the unique ecology of Eastside forests and the number of imperiled animals found in the Tieton, a place of considerable diversity due to its location between the Columbia Basin shrub-steppe and the forested eastern front of the Cascades. Because the ownership pattern is checker-boarded—a historic legacy from Washington's pre-statehood days—the four parties recognized the need to work collaboratively to ensure the lands protected by the Conservancy and those surrounding it are managed effectively and with an eye towards the larger landscape.

You can read more on the Washington chapter Web site: nature.org/Washington.

About the Friends

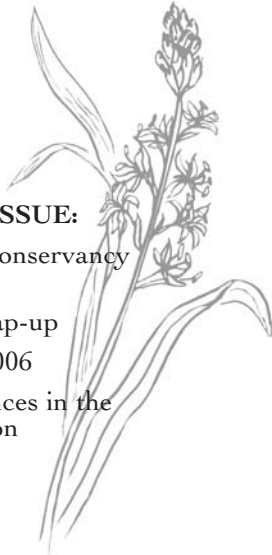
The Friends of Our Natural Heritage is a group of approximately 1,600 citizens throughout Washington state who provide a voice for the conservation of natural areas. By taking simple steps to educate officials and community leaders about the value of our state's natural heritage, Friends are helping to safeguard some of the most ecologically valuable lands remaining in Washington. Stay involved—and invite your *friends* to join the Friends!

For more information about the program or to sign up, visit our Web site at nature.org/washington/friends, or contact Jeff Compton at The Nature Conservancy of Washington: (206) 436-6249 or jcompton@tnc.org.

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WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Why The Nature Conservancy opposes I-933
- State legislative wrap-up
- Federal focus for 2006
- Conservation advances in the Tieton River Canyon
- Friends resources



Friends visit Kitsap Peninsula natural areas

On May 20 some Friends of Our Natural Heritage visited two state natural areas on the Kitsap Peninsula: Kitsap Forest Natural Area Preserve and the surrounding Stavis Creek Natural Resource Conservation Area.

Our host was Kelly Heinz, Natural Areas Manager for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) South Puget Sound Region. Kelly led us through a dizzying maze of roads, showing us part of the Kitsap landscape that most folks have not experienced. She shared the history of these natural areas, their significance, and upcoming milestones and challenges.

These state preserves are part of a larger system managed by DNR under the Natural Areas Program. The Nature Conservancy partners regularly with this program to enhance the preservation of our natural heritage. And these special places have benefited directly from some of the programs that the Conservancy and the Friends of Our Natural Heritage support, such as the Trust Land Transfer Program and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

More details and photos on the Friends Web site: nature.org/Washington/friends



*"We did not weave the web of life;
we are merely a strand in it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do
to ourselves."*

– CHIEF SEATTLE