



## News Release

### Cascade Land Conservancy Agrees to Acquire PSE's White River Lands; Transaction Would Protect 10 Miles of Undeveloped River Frontage

BELLEVUE, Wash.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 17, 2006--Up to 3,000 acres of woodlands along a 10-mile stretch of the White River between Buckley and Auburn could be spared from development under Puget Sound Energy's planned sale of the property to the Cascade Land Conservancy.

The two organizations today announced they have agreed on the basic terms of the transaction, enabling the Conservancy to start down the path toward permanent conservation of the lands.

"The property holds significant ecological value, whether as lowland habitat for fish and wildlife or simply as a place for people to enjoy nature," said Phil Bussey, PSE's senior vice president of corporate affairs. "Puget Sound Energy is thrilled about the prospect of this land being protected for the benefit of future generations."

Elk, deer, bears, cougars, bald eagles, great blue herons, wood ducks, and other wildlife frequent the property's forests, wetlands, canyons, and meadows.

"This is a rare opportunity to advance a landmark project early in the life of the 100-year Cascade Agenda program," said Gene Duvernoy, president, Cascade Land Conservancy. "Conserving properties like this is the basis of the Cascade Agenda. There is an opportunity to provide parks and open space and conserve working forests. Retaining these kinds of landscapes is important to maintaining the quality of life of the region."

The planned sale, still subject to an appraisal, involves about 3,000 acres of undeveloped, PSE-owned land straddling both sides of the White River -- about half in King County, half in Pierce County. The land was acquired nearly a century ago as part of PSE's White River Hydroelectric Project. The river lands are now surplus to PSE's needs.

Bussey said a number of parties deserve special credit for their advocacy of protecting the property, including state Sen. Pam Roach, whose 31st Legislative District encompasses large segments of the White River lands; Pierce County Council Chairman Shawn Bunney, co-chairman of the Lake Tapps Task Force; the Puyallup Tribe of Indians; the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe; and several municipal governments in the White River area.

PSE chose to work with the nonprofit Cascade Land Conservancy, Bussey said, because of the organization's expertise in conserving critical open space, either by acquiring and holding sensitive lands itself or, more often, by creatively arranging for other conservation-minded parties to take ownership and manage lands in an environmentally beneficial way.

"We will ensure that these White River lands become an asset for generations to come and are put to use in a socially and environmentally responsible way," said Duvernoy.

The Conservancy has a strong desire to craft a disposition program that addresses as many of the interests in the lands as possible while guaranteeing that the property retains its essential natural features, Duvernoy said.

"The Cascade Land Conservancy is the right group to be involved with this vital and far-reaching project," said King County Executive Ron Sims. "I know the CLC will bring all the parties together and come to a solution that works for all people of the region."

"This is conservation at its best," said Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg. "We're not just protecting a few hundred feet of riverfront. This plan puts thousands of acres and miles of river aside for generations to come. I'm looking forward to working with the Cascade Land Conservancy to make it happen."

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