

**Island County Conservation Futures Program
Maintenance and Operations Funding
Project title: Kettles trails, Saratoga Woods, and Ala spit Noxious Weed Management
Application Year: 2023**

Applicant's Name: Island County Noxious Weed Control Board

Applicant's Address: P.O. Box 5000, Coupeville, WA 98239

Contact Person: Seth Luginbill

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E-mail: s.luginbill@islandcountywa.gov

Property Owner Name: Island County Parks

Property Owner Phone: 360-679-7335

Address of Property: Kettles trails are located between Hwy 20 and Fort Ebey state park and extending north till Libbey Rd; Saratoga woods is position and Ala spit is located on the Northeast side of Whidbey Island, Southeast of Hoypus Point.

Tax Parcel Number(s): Kettles trails: R13231-140-3320 R13231-199-2300, R13231-199-1690, R13231-199-1000, R13231-199-0350, R13231-402-1590, R13231-400-2200, R13230-223-1150, R13230-154-1170, R13230-094-1250, R13230-038-1360; Saratoga woods: R33029-189-2190, R33029-232-1610, R33029-165-1620, R33029-147-0620, R33029-181-0620, R33029-214-0610, R33029-247-0610, R33029-290-0670, R33029-323-0670, R33029-356-0670, R33029-389-0670; Ala Spit: R23432-458-1760

Acres or Square Feet of Property: Total 309 acres: Kettles trails (184 acres); Saratoga Woods (117 acres); Ala spit county park (8 acres)

Percentage of Property Affected by Project: Approx. 26 acres (Kettles 12, Saratoga 13.5 ac, Ala spit .5 ac)

Summary of Proposed Project Costs and Budget: The Amount Requested is **\$34,182** for two years of noxious weed control work. The amount requested would cover a noxious weed control and eradication work in 2023 (\$17,382) and additional control work in 2024 (\$16,800).

Included with Application:

Attachment A – Maps of each CFF property

Attachment B – Estimated Project Budget

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Attachment C – Budget Detail

Project Description:

This proposal incorporates three separate CFF owned properties all dealing with noxious weed infestations. As a result of the unpredictable nature of noxious weed infestation it was deemed prudent by the noxious weed control board to wrap both properties into one proposal so as to easily divert resources to areas most in need depending on response to treatments in previous years as well as in the first year of this proposal if awarded. The properties included in this proposal are all located on Whidbey Island and are as follows: Kettles trail system, Saratoga woods, and the Ala spit county park.

Kettles trails:

In 1996 Island County purchased 141 acres of forested land located north of Coupeville and adjacent to Fort Ebey state park.

The Kettles Trails is one of Island County's most treasured recreation areas, particularly by the mountain bike and equestrian communities. The Kettles Trails is one of the premier equestrian and mountain bike areas on the Island, with particular importance to north Whidbey, where it draws significant numbers of cyclists from Oak Harbor and Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. From a recreation standpoint, protection of the Property allows vastly improved access for equestrian and mountain bike users of the park.

The trail system is composed of over 35 miles of recreational trails utilized for an assortment of activities. The area is populated with a wide assortment of unique plants and animal species.

Noxious weed control work has only recently become an active component of management actions within the kettles trail system. In 2020, the ICNWC program was contracted by IC parks to conduct initial eradication of noxious weed species found to be present at the Alito addition portion of this complex. Over one ton of noxious weed material was removed and treated during this contract. In 2021, additional CFF M&O funding was awarded to the ICNWC program to conduct control and eradication work throughout the entirety of the kettles trail complex.

There are currently nine documented noxious weed species present within the Kettles trail system. Four of these species are listed as regulated species under RCW 17.10, meaning that the landowner is **legally** required to control infestations. The majority of these infestations are located along the northern three acres abutting Libbey Rd and along the access road that runs north to south through the 43 acres. These species include Spurge Laurel (Class B), Tansy ragwort (Class B), Canada thistle (Class C regulated), Bull thistle (Class C regulated), Scotch broom, common teasel, common St. johnswort, English Ivy, and Himalayan blackberry.

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The park is populated, by an abundance of native species and is an ecosystem of importance. Species present at the site include native Pacific rhododendrons, Pacific madrones, Evergreen huckleberry, Douglas fir, Western Red Cedar, Red Alder and many other keystone species.

Saratoga Woods:

This forested park is located on the surface of a landscape with an impressive glacial history that exists beneath the dirt. Sitting on the edge of a glacial drumlin this 117-acre county owned park hosts a variety of different tree species growing in a varying array of different stand ages. Douglas fir, Western Red Cedar, Red Alder are the predominate species represented. It is also home to one of the largest glacial erratics in Washington state. Island County public works has begun a mitigation project in the wetland area of the park located in the southeast corner addressing some of the weed infestations; however, there are noxious weed species not addressed within the upland area and the old airstrip that pose a threat to the continued enjoyment and health of the forest ecosystem.

Ala spit:

This county park was purchased in 1994 in partnership with the Washington state recreation and conservation office (RCO). It includes a tidal spit and upland park near the east boundary of Deception Pass State Park. These 8 acres are popular for beach combing and fishing as well as being a Cascadia Marine Trail access point. It has undergone serious restoration work through Salmon recovery funding board (SRFB) with the aim to preserve both fish and bird habitat as well as recreational opportunities.

While significant attention has been paid to the marine aspects of this park the upland portion has largely been ignored. Four noxious weed species have been observed to be present in this upland habitat of park including yellow archangel (class B, designated), Bull and Canada thistle (Class C, Designated) and Scotch broom (Class B, undesignated).

Objective:

The goal of this work is to continue or initiate the removal of all identified noxious weed species with focus being placed on eradication of all regulated noxious weeds and Scotch broom populations in the parks.

A. Ecological Integrity

The kettles and the Saratoga woods properties are comprised of an unbroken, healthy forest of mature Douglas fir and Pacific madrone with a robust native understory dominated by native rhododendrons. They also boast alder groves that are essential in successional growth of our coastal forest ecosystems. The properties fall within a Habitat Corridor in Element 7 of the County's Comprehensive Plan. It also lies within a wildlife corridor identified in The Nature

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Conservancy's analysis of Resilient Terrestrial Landscapes in the Pacific Northwest. Over the last three years the spread of tansy ragwort and scotch broom has been observed to increasingly move further into the main acreage of the trail system.

Ala spit is home to an important tideland and pocket estuary which is critical as nursery grounds for many of our juvenile salmon species.

B. Hazard of Liability

All parts of poison hemlock, and some parts of tansy ragwort are extremely toxic to humans and livestock. Spurge laurel also has a lesser toxicity that can cause illness in both humans and animals. Control in excess of 95% of these noxious weeds will significantly reduce the potential impact of accidental poisoning or negative reaction to contact with the plant.

Washington's noxious weed law (RCW 17.10) requires landowners, including city, county, and state land agencies, to control or eradicate certain noxious weeds that occur on their property. Since private citizens are equally responsible for controlling listed noxious weeds on their properties, the county could be liable and legally challenged for not obeying the same state laws. The noxious weed control work proposed for kettles trails, Saratoga woods, and Ala spit will ensure compliance with noxious weed laws.

C. Special Status

Kettles/Saratoga/Ala Spit:

All three areas fulfill elements of the Island County comprehensive plan (ICCP) created in 2016 including: Protection of natural forest, wetlands, wildlife habitat, ground water resources, aquifer recharge areas, and low impact/passive outdoor recreation opportunities.

D. Habitat values not previously covered

Ala Spit is an important area for migratory birds as well as a frequently used harvesting site for a number of shellfish. It's ideal habitat for both avian and marine animals.

E. Public Access

The kettles trail has six access points located along the Hwy 20/Libbey Rd corridors. This includes a newly installed (2022) large livestock trailer lot located off a Libbey Rd.

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Saratoga Woods has a main parking lot located off of Saratoga Rd. It is also connected to both the Metcalf trust and Putney woods trail systems.

Ala spit has a small, paved parking area with some 20 spots located off of Geck Rd.

F. Management Plan

Currently no comprehensive plan exists for either Saratoga woods or Ala spit preserve.

G. Supported by Community Plans

All three parks are owned and operated by Island County Parks. The Parks Plan which is in the Island County Comprehensive Plan supports noxious weed management. This project will reduce the time that the Island Parks Maintenance person has to spend controlling weeds at this site. It has support from Whidbey Camano Land Trust who holds a conservation easement on the parks.

H. Existing Infrastructure

All parks have informational kiosks. There is an effort to conduct restoration of the picnic shelter at Saratoga woods through a 2021 CFF project.

I. Develops infrastructure

N/A

J. Long Term Viability

With many partners involved at all the parks the long-term viability for this work is very high. Support from Island County parks department, the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, as well as citizens group such as the Whidbey Island bicycle club means there is widespread support.

K. Other Resources

The current ICNWP Coordinator possesses a WSDA pesticide applicator's license (No. 84304) with aquatic and right-of-way endorsements. The ICNWP Coordinator is responsible for keeping the license current by earning the required number of recertification credits each year. The ICNWP Coordinator also has the necessary National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to be able to use appropriate herbicides in aquatic areas. The ICNWP Coordinator is knowledgeable about plants, their life cycles, ecosystem function, and integrated pest management techniques.

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Volunteers will play an integral role and assist in the following activities

- Scotch Broom removal at Kettles and Saratoga woods sites.
- Noxious weed control program has sufficient supply of hand tools, herbicide, and other weed removal equipment to conduct work and volunteers when involved

L. Public Ownership

Both properties are Fee simple and owned by Island County Parks

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Attachment A

Map 1 – Kettle’s trail (with noxious weed points 2016-2022)



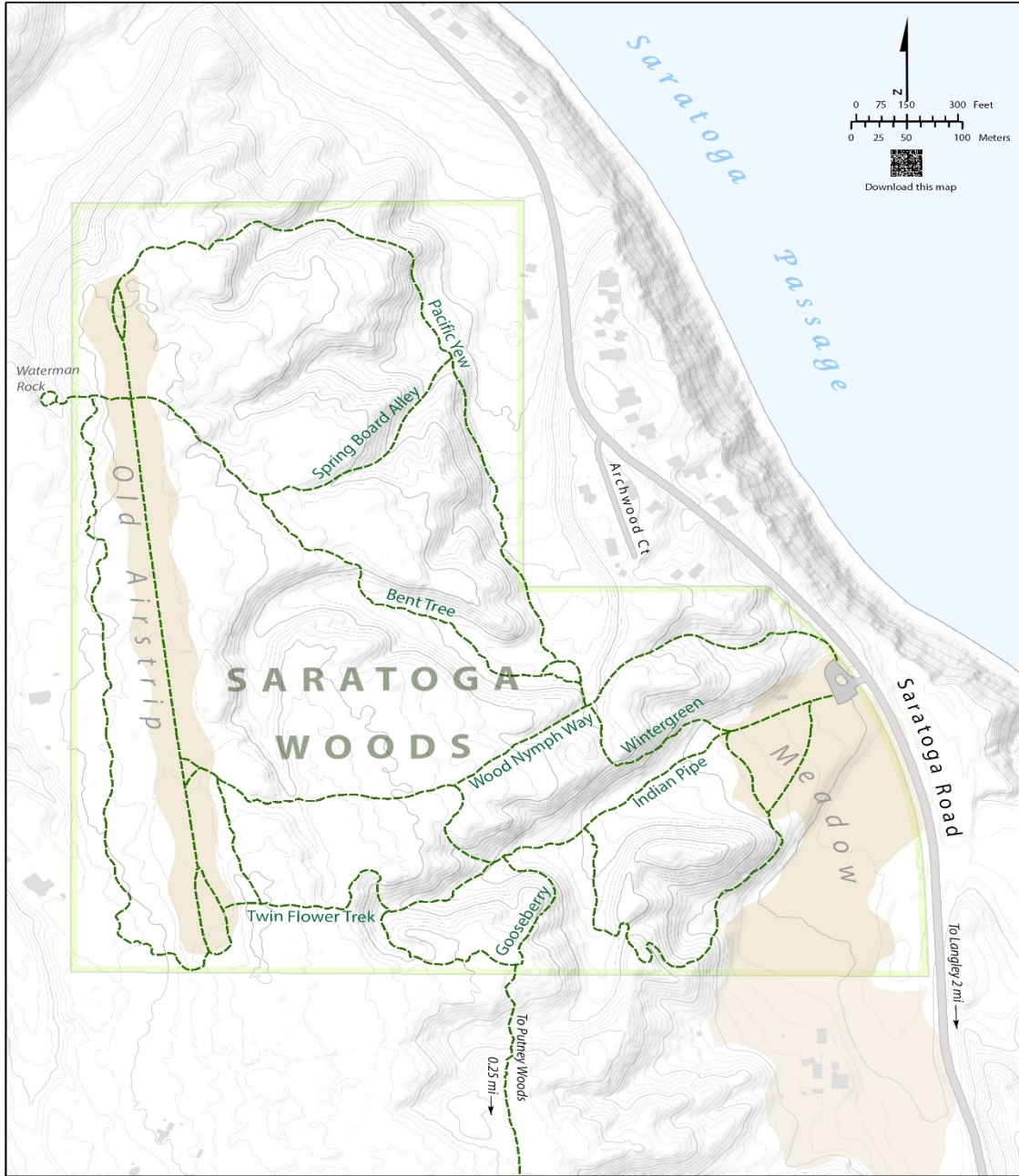
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Map 2 - Kettle's trail map system



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Map 3 – Saratoga woods



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Map 4 – Ala Spit County Park



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Attachment B

Proposed Budget for Kettles trails, Saratoga woods, and Ala Spit

Attachment B					
Estimated Project Budget					
	Island County Conservation Futures Fund				
Proposed Project Application					
Project name	Kettles/Saratoga/Ala spit noxious weed control		Year 2023-2024		
Planning	Category	CFF	Other Funding Sources		Total Funding
	Salaries and Benefits	1758			1758
	Consultants/Sub-contracting				0
	Good and Services				0
	Travel & Per Diem				0
	Other				0
	Total Planning	1758			1758
Maintenance and Operations					
	Salaries and Benefits	26132			26132
	Consultants/Sub-contracting				0
	Good and Services				0
	Travel & Per Diem				0
	Other				0
	Total Maintenance/	26132			26132
Management & Administration					0
	Salaries and Benefits	5697			5697
	Consultants/Sub-contracting				0
	Good and Services				0
	Travel & Per Diem				0
	Other				0
	Total Management & Admin	5697			5697
Equipment					
	Technology Capital Items*				0
	Technology Supplies*				0
	Equipment*	595			595
	Other				0
	Total Equipment	595			595
Property Acquisition					
	Land Purchase	0			0
	Other Acquisition Costs	0			0
	Total Acquisition Value	0			0
	Land Donation	0			0
	Total Budget	34182		0	34182
* For all line items with "*" please provided attached detailed list of items and costs					

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Attachment C

Kettles/Saratoga/Ala Spit CFF NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT						
Buget Attachment C						
Budget Item:			Work Year 2023	Work Year 2024		
Salary for IC Noxious Weed Program Coordinator						
(No. of Hrs.x\$40.31/Hr.)	43.97	28.48				
Noxious weed control work*						
Project Planning			\$879	\$879		
Field Time			\$8,794	\$8,794		
Seasonal staff			\$4,272	\$4,272		
Other Equipment & Materials**						
Nitrile Gloves			\$30	\$30		
Trash Bags			\$25	\$25		
Herbicide			\$300			
Surfactant			\$185			
			ST=	\$14,485	\$14,000	
Public Health Adminstrative overhead (@20%)			\$2,897	\$2,800		
Total			\$17,382	\$16,800	Total For 2 Years =	\$34,182
* It is anticipated that most of the noxious weed control work would be done by IC Noxious weed coordinator. When possible volunteer services would be incorporated						
** Equipment & Materials: Most of the equipment necessary for the control work will be supplied by the IC Noxious Weed Program Coordinator.						