

BEAR RIDGE COMMUNITY FOREST LAND ACQUISITION PROTECTS MUNICIPAL DRINKING WATER SOURCE

STATE PROGRAM: Washington Department of Ecology

ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT: City of Ilwaco, Washington

ASSISTANCE AMOUNT: \$1,274,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Ilwaco, located in southwestern Washington State between the Pacific Ocean and the Columbia River, was interested in protecting the Indian Creek Reservoir, which is the City's primary drinking water source. According to the City's 2015 Water Source Control Plan, purchasing the land and timber rights for properties adjacent to Indian Creek and its surrounding tributaries, which feed the Reservoir, would be a significant step in protecting the municipal drinking water supply and helping to secure the stability and productivity of the Indian Creek watershed.

In 2022, the City received a \$1,274,000 loan from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to assist with acquiring 210 acres of land and timber rights, plus an additional adjacent 178 acres of timber rights. By working with partners, the City was able to leverage this seed money to secure the remaining funding needed for the \$4 million dollar project. This included \$500,000 from Washington's Centennial Clean Water Fund, funds from the U.S. Forest Service Community Forest Program, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Project Fund, Washington State Department of Commerce, and state and federal legislative appropriations.

The City will develop a Forest Management Plan to ensure the future security and productivity of the municipal drinking watershed while creating outdoor recreational opportunities and sustainable timber jobs for the City's residents. The acquisition and protection of land and timber rights not only provides benefits to the community, but it also protects the habitat for riparian and upland plant and wildlife species, including resident trout.

To read more about this case study, please visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/january-2023/ilwaco-s-bear-ridge-community-forest-becomes-a-rea>

