



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Mica Peak Conservation Area Doubles in Size with Latest Acquisition

SPOKANE COUNTY, November 30, 2018 –Spokane County’s voter-supported Conservation Futures Program successfully acquired 900 acres from Inland Empire Paper Company today. As the number one-ranked property on the 2016 Conservation Futures acquisition list, the purchase of the Mica Peak North property creates the fourth largest block of preserved public land in Spokane County by connecting the Mica Peak Conservation Area to Liberty Lake Regional Park for a total of 5,300 contiguous acres of County park land to explore.

“The Mica Peak North location is a unique property that will add to our region’s quality of life, and will also help attract new businesses and investment to our area,” said, Josh Kerns, Chair of the Spokane County Board of Commissioners.

The 900-acre property was purchased for \$2.3 million, within appraised value. Spokane County is positioned to be reimbursed up to \$1.2 million of the purchase price through a Washington Recreation and Wildlife Program’s (WWRP) Urban Wildlife habitat grant pending the outcome of the upcoming 2019 State legislative session. “As a grant application in a highly competitive process, the Mica Peak North acquisition was the top-ranked local project in this program, which helps reinforce what we already knew – that it’s a significant habitat and recreational property,” said Paul Knowles, Special Projects Manager for Spokane County Parks.

Paul Buckland, Forest Resource Manager for Inland Empire Paper Company, highlighted some of the ecological attributes of the property, “It’s exceptional forestland that contains diverse forest types - including areas of late successional forests.”

Doug Chase, Spokane County Parks Director said, “This property is a perfect example of how the Conservation Futures Program can not only acquire and preserve the special places we love, but do so in a way that maximizes our local tax dollars by leveraging them to obtain outside funding.”

As an addition to Mica Peak Conservation Area, the new property will be managed to preserve wildlife habitat, maintain and enhance forest health and provide non-motorized recreational opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding.

Inland Empire Paper Company is donating resources to assist Spokane County in developing a management plan for the site that will accomplish Spokane County's forest management objectives. Kevin Rasler, the company's President and General Manager said, "This piece of forestland is truly unique and sits right in the community's back yard. It should be accessible to the public and the Conservation Futures Program was the right vehicle to make that happen. Spokane County has been an excellent partner throughout this process. Their patience and assistance as we worked through a complicated property exchange process was a key element in getting this land into the program."

The new property can be accessed by parking at the Belmont Road Trailhead located at 20002 E. Belmont Road and hiking through Mica Peak Conservation Area's evolving trail system, which is currently under development through a partnership that includes Washington Trails Association and Evergreen East chapter of Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance.

For more information on Spokane County's Conservation Futures Program and Mica Peak Conservation Area please visit: www.spokanecounty.org/parks/ and click on "Conservation Futures."

About Spokane County

Spokane County government serves half a million citizens and 13 municipal jurisdictions, making it the fourth-largest county in the State of Washington. For more information, visit www.spokanecounty.org, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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