FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alcoa Foundation Awards Major Grant for Outdoor Education at Saddle Rock

WENATCHEE — Alcoa Foundation has made a grant of $90,000 to the Chelan Douglas Land Trust for an Outdoor Education Center at the Saddle Rock Natural Area, it was announced today.

This grant is a remarkable demonstration of Alcoa’s ongoing commitment to the Wenatchee area, even while the Alcoa Wenatchee Works plant is curtailed. This is the third major grant Alcoa Foundation has made to support the Land Trust’s work in the Wenatchee Foothills, and the first focused directly on improving outdoor learning opportunities for our local students.

This collaborative project with the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (land steward and educator), City of Wenatchee (property owner and construction manager), and the Wenatchee School District (educator) will create outdoor classrooms as part of a new trailhead with restrooms, adequate parking, a fully accessible trail, and interpretive stations at the Saddle Rock Natural Area. The outdoor classrooms will include an outdoor amphitheater with tiered stone seating, and two covered picnic shelter classrooms in which students can be sheltered from sun or rain, greatly increasing the capacity to provide outdoor education most of the year.

“This grant will enable a diverse cross-section of our community to learn about the natural world,” said Curt Soper, Land Trust Executive Director. “Saddle Rock is the ideal place for our community’s young people to grow their connection and commitment to caring for this beautiful place in the future.”

The Saddle Rock Natural Area is a heavily-used 325-acre community landmark owned by the City of Wenatchee. It was purchased from the state in 2011 through the Land Trust’s Wenatchee Foothills Campaign, which successfully raised $8.67 million to double the protected land in the Wenatchee Foothills. Currently, Saddle Rock is the primary environmental education destination in the valley, used regularly by Wenatchee High School and Wenatchee Valley College, and by every Wenatchee School District 2nd and 5th grader (1,385 students). Existing facilities are extremely inadequate for the high volume of use, with no accommodation for school buses, no place for students to gather as a group, no place to escape the sun or rain, and only two rented portable restrooms.

“Alcoa and our Wenatchee team are excited about the investment and partnership with Chelan-Douglas Land Trust,” said David Hulse, Wenatchee Works Site Manager. “This is an important education and recreation area and an organization with a proven record of success, so we feel strongly about the benefits of this grant for the entire community.”
This project is broadly supported and is the culmination of many years of work by a wide cross-section of the community. Improved access and amenities at Saddle Rock was identified as a top priority by the community through public planning processes used to create the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Plan, Foothills Trails Plan, Foothills Community Strategy, Saddle Rock Trails Plan and most recently, the design process for the outdoor education area. These planning processes were conducted over 8 years and included written community surveys, multiple community workshops that involved neighboring property owners, interest groups, managing agencies, the general public, and environmental educators.

“Saddle Rock is an iconic landform that residents and visitors to the community have been enjoying for generations,” said David Erickson, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director. “With the completion of this gateway project, along with habitat restoration and trail improvement work in the near future, it is our hope that Saddle Rock will be a source of community pride for generations to come.”

The Chelan-Douglas Land Trust is a local non-profit working to conserve our land, our water, and our way of life. The Land Trust has a 31-year record of working collaboratively with property owners and communities to identify and protect the region’s most important natural landscapes forever. For more information: www.cdlandtrust.org.

Alcoa Foundation’s predecessor, currently known as Legacy Alcoa Foundation (and formerly known as Alcoa Foundation), was founded in 1952 as one of the few endowed corporate foundations in the United States. As a result of the separation of Alcoa Inc. into Alcoa Corporation and Arconic Inc. in November 2016, two new foundations were formed, into which the assets of Legacy Alcoa Foundation were transferred. One of the newly formed foundations, known now as Alcoa Foundation, is the foundation associated with Alcoa Corporation. Alcoa Foundation is the sponsor going forward of this grant. Today, Alcoa Foundation invests where Alcoa Corporation has a presence, providing grants that contribute to environmental excellence around the world, particularly in the areas of biodiversity conservation and climate change research. Learn more at alcoafoundation.com and follow @AlcoaFoundation on Twitter.

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