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April 14, 2016

Campus Sustainability Fund Committee  
University of Washington.

RE: SER Nursery Research Assistantships

Dear CSF Committee:

I'm writing in support of the request for funding for two Research Assistant positions at UW's Society for Ecological Restoration's Nursery for 2016/17. UW Grounds strives to create an atmosphere fostering engagement, stewardship, and a sense of regional identity on campus, and an opportunity to continue collaborative and inclusive partnerships with the SER Nursery will further this objective. Main campus gardeners have been both grateful for and impressed with the nursery staff's enthusiasm, organization, and knowledgeability in such a relatively short period of operation, and we are excited for the opportunity to grow this relationship. Our preference in acquiring indigenous plant material for both habitat and aesthetics on campus is that it comes from local and known entities so as to encourage locally-adapted genetic integrity and ensure responsibly-collected source material. In purchasing from SER Nursery, we can be confident their plant material will thrive on our campus because not only has it evolved to do so in this region, but also because the plant hardiness is apparent in the careful cultivation by nursery staff.

As both a former restoration and native plant nursery technician, I believe there is also a great educational opportunity for students and nursery staff to follow up with SER Nursery-provided plant material in campus landscapes and close the gap between cultivation, installation, and continued landscape maintenance. The new challenges presented during the maintenance phase of restoration and native plantings are the greatest but most often overlooked, and the opportunity to have demonstration plantings on campus may well inform better cultivation practices at the nursery in the future. Main campus gardeners are open to many more avenues of collaboration and are excited that SER Nursery has this opportunity to expand their operations and capabilities in providing interesting, hardy, and diverse indigenous plant material. We are especially excited that their knowledge, labor, and enthusiasm will be shared in-house among future nursery staff to forge strong relationships with and stewardship of campus landscapes. Thanks to SER Nursery's diligence, the ability to experience beautiful, higher-functioning ecosystems will reward faculty, staff, students, and visitors for many years to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my great enthusiasm and full support!

Sincerely,



Tom Erler