## Sample Letter Proposal

February 9, 2016

Mr. James T. Mills

President

The Commonwealth Foundation

545 Acre Hill Road, Suite 178

Mountainville, CA 97027

Dear Mr. Mills:

On behalf of the board of Save Mount Artemis, I am writing to request a grant of $23,000 from the Commonwealth Foundation to help publish *Trail through the Mist,* a natural history guide to Mount Artemis and the surrounding region. The book, by acclaimed naturalist David Hale, will advance our Fund’s education and land preservation work. We intend to use it in workshops for interns and the general public and as a fundraising tool – given to members and donors to our Crowd Funding campaign. It also will be sold at the mountain’s information station.

Save Mount Artemis is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, founded in Artemis Valley in 1971 to protect Mount Artemis State Park and its spectacular plant and wildlife. Its goal is to acquire all of the remaining privately held land within the park’s boundaries. Through purchases and land contributions, Save Mount Artemis gradually has increased the park’s holdings from 6,788 acres to 18,250 acres of open space.

Our board has learned through hard experience that state, federal, and foundation funding may not be readily available when a precious parcel of land comes on the market for immediate sale. Save Mount Artemis wants to be poised to take action when land acquisition opportunities arise.

Our board plans to address three important goals with publication of *Trail through the Mist*: 1) educating youth and the general public about enlightened use of Mount Artemis and the region’s distinctive natural resources; 2) expanding broad-based local support for land acquisition and preservation; 3) raising private funds so we may acquire additional land within Mount Artemis State Park. Our current fundraising goal is $250,000, which would allow us to make an offer on 152 acres crucial to the preservation of the Pacific pocket mouse (now on the Federal Threatened Species List) and to lengthening the Mountain Wildlife Corridor, used by the area’s population of bobcats.

Save Mount Artemis receives annual support from the State Parks Association, the Western Rim Regional Parks District, the Salomon Fund, and other foundations, as well as individual donors. Our popular environmental education programs work with local middle and high school science teachers, teens, and the general public. We also manage a paid summer internship program for high school and college students who serve as docents for visitors. Save Mount Artemis earns revenue by conducting guided hikes, selling memberships and sponsorships, and — increasingly — by publishing and selling publications.

In 2011, Save Mount Artemis hired Helen Stern as its second executive director following the retirement of founding director David Erickson. Ms. Stern, a former attorney, has 20 years of administrative experience in conservation and land trust organizations in Colorado and New Mexico.

Each year 70,000 visitors visit the Mount Artemis Park’s spectacular vista points and hiking trails. To serve these visitors, Save Mount Artemis has published maps to the mountain’s trails and a series of booklets about the mountain — covering insect, mammal, and plant life; Native American history; geology; and paleontology. Pamphlets are used as membership benefits and crowd funding gifts, and are sold to park visitors and through our website.

The pamphlets have proven to be very popular — the four original titles have been reprinted three times each. Each pamphlet includes a donor card and reply envelope. Although it’s a low-key approach to fundraising, it’s proven to be very successful. Last year Save Mount Artemis received $76,000 in contributions that were sent to our offices in pamphlet reply envelopes. These funds were in addition to the $6,000 in net income generated through pamphlet sales.

Although the pamphlets’ popularity exceeded our expectations, many donors, members, and customers have asked for a more comprehensive book about the mountain and surrounding area.

We anticipate a work of high quality. *Trails through the Mist* will be written by one of the West’s best-known nature writers and feature 48 pages of photographs by Matt O’Neal and Linda Connell along with images from the Mount Artemis archives. It will be designed by Adrian Krug and printed by Perseverance Press. The book will retail for $29.95. The photographers also are contributing two sets of signed prints to be used as incentive gifts for major donors. Author David Hale is so enthusiastic about working with us that he has waived his author’s fees as a contribution to the project.

We will evaluate this project through reviews, book sales, and fundraising results from efforts focusing on the book. Measurable outcomes will be the acres acquired.

Because of many in-kind contributions to this project, publication costs have been kept low: Printing and initial distribution of 10,000 copies will total only $43,000. Of this, we have received $10,000 from the Valley Community Foundation and another $10,000 from two board members.

Knowing of Commonwealth Foundation’s interest in preserving open space in the American West and in educating future generations about the importance of land conservation, we hope you will consider assisting us with this project. Please if you have any questions. I can be reached during business hours at (512) 863-6742; and Helen Stern can be reached at (512) 766-1644.

Sincerely,

Sandra Baine, Board of Directors