

Sample Letter of Inquiry

February 8, 2005

Mr. James Trusty
President
The Common Earth Foundation
545 Acre Hill Road, Suite 178
Mountainville, CA 97027

Dear Mr. Trusty:

On behalf of the board of Save Mount Artemis, I am writing to ask whether the Common Earth Foundation would invite a proposal for \$23,000 to help publish *Trail Through the Mist*, a natural history guide to the mountain and its surrounding region. The book, by acclaimed naturalist David Hale Smith — a member of our board who is contributing the manuscript — will be sold to visitors to the Mountain, given as a gift to donors, and distributed throughout the region, thereby advancing public awareness of the Mountain's unusual assets and advancing our Fund's education and land preservation work.

Save Mount Artemis is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, founded in Pleasant 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 already has increased the park's holdings from 6,788 acres to 58,000 acres of open space.

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. We raise additional funds by conducting guided hikes, selling memberships, sponsorships, and — increasingly — by publishing and selling our publications.

This year Save Mount Artemis hired Helen Stern as its second executive director following the retirement of founding director David Ericksen. Ms. Stern, a former attorney, has twenty 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 sold to park visitors and through our Web site.

These have proven to be very popular — the four original titles have been reprinted three times each, and many donors, members, and customers have asked for a more comprehensive book about the mountain and surrounding area.

Each pamphlet includes a donor card and reply envelope. While a low-key approach to fundraising, it's proven to be very successful. Last year Save Mount Artemis received \$86,000 from contributions returned to our offices in pamphlet reply envelopes. These funds were in addition to the \$16,000 in net income generated through pamphlet sales.

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. That's why we're working so hard to build an individual donor program.

Our board plans to accomplish three important goals with *Trail Through the Mist*: 1) educating the public about enlightened use of Mount Artemis and other natural resources; 2) building broad-based local support for land acquisition and preservation; 3) raising private funds and acquiring additional land within Mount Artemis State Park. Our current fundraising goal is \$250,000 so that we may make an offer on 152 acres crucial to the preservation of the western whipsnake (now on the Federal Threatened Species List) and to lengthening the Mountain Wildlife Corridor, used by its population of bobcats.

We also 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 on behalf of Save Mount Artemis. 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.

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 Common Earth Foundation's interest in preserving open space in the American West and in educating future generations about the importance of land conservation, we hope very much that you will consider assisting us with this project. Please call me if you have any questions. I can be reached during business hours at (512) 863-6742.

Sincerely,
Sandra Baine, Board of Directors