

Long Range Strategic Plan

2004 ~ 2010



Serving King County residents since 1949

Dear Reader,

As the King Conservation District (KCD) publishes this strategic plan in mid-2004, there is an array of key forces influencing the natural resource conditions here in King County. To a significant extent, KCD is already responding to these influencing forces with a well-recognized body of expertise that is being efficiently brought to bear on the natural resource challenges of this region. This plan, therefore, seeks to highlight the essential new initiatives that are the highest priorities actions beyond what is outlined in KCD's operational work plan and carried out in our daily program activities.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to map out the adjustments we need to make to leverage our capabilities to most effectively address the emerging natural resource challenges and opportunities in our District. We will most successfully advance our mission if we stay focused on the priorities outlined in this plan, while remaining nimble and responsive to internal changes in capacity and external changes in our operating context.

The influencing forces that affect our ability to "support sustainable use of natural resources in King County" are political, economic and organizational in nature. Growth management is a state and local concern. The 39 cities in our county and King County itself were mandated by the State's Growth Management Act to create Comprehensive Plans in 1994, to be updated in 2004. Now, ten years into this growth management process, renewed questions about property rights and sound science are echoing across rural barns and council chambers. KCD's technical expertise will be employed as part of King County's revised critical areas ordinance, though the funding arrangements for these extra responsibilities is still being finalized.

Some of the foundational Federal environmental legislation, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts struggle to address our ever-increasing use of vehicles, our lawn and garden practices and other non-point sources that degrade air and water quality and compromise ecological functions in our district.

The organizational backdrop for our natural resource predicament in the District includes a wide-range of jurisdictional entities, including 39 cities, King County, a multitude of special districts and Watershed Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA's), who are promulgating salmon recovery plans to address the listing of Chinook salmon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Given the shortfall in fiscal resources and the fragmentation of responsibilities across jurisdictions for sustaining natural resources in this District, an essential responsibility of the King Conservation District is to facilitate a shared approach that reduces duplication and ensures coordinated actions across the public, private and non-profit sectors of our communities. Toward this end, the KCD will collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders to assemble and analyze known scientific information toward the production of a King County Ecosystem and Natural Resource Status, Trends and Priority Actions Report. This report will serve as basis for the development of a multi-jurisdictional strategic natural resource management plan and will serve to guide future KCD strategic and operational priorities.

We look forward to working with you as we address our natural resource challenges and opportunities and advance the vital new initiatives outlined in this plan.

Sincerely,

Board of Supervisors
King Conservation District

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KCD VISION PROPOSAL

King County's natural resources are valued and cared for by its residents as essential environmental, economic and community assets.

OUR MISSION

To promote the sustainable uses of natural resources through responsible stewardship.

PROFILE

The King Conservation District

- Is 1 of 48 conservation districts in the State of Washington, and part of a network of over 3000 conservation districts nationwide, which collectively makes us the largest private land conservation organization in the country.
- Is a non-regulatory, technical assistance agency that administers conservation programs and financial assistance for both the farm and urban environment.
- Maintains a small, but dedicated and skilled professional staff, committed to the local region. We maintain a cost effective, hands on, grass roots, community based approach with our projects and activities.
- Is affiliated with the WA State Conservation Commission and the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, which allows us to bring state and federal conservation funding and resources to King County. We are authorized and guided under Washington state law RCW 89.08.

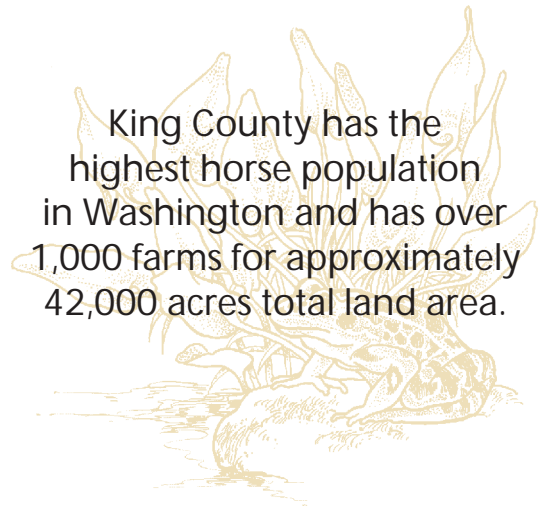
The King Conservation District's boundaries include most of western King County with the exception of the incorporated towns of Enumclaw, Federal Way, Skykomish and the portions of Milton and Pacific within King County. The industrial forest lands of eastern King County are also not part of the District. We serve over 550, 000 parcels of land and approximately 1.5 million residents. Thirty four incorporated cities and towns are members of the King CD as well as unincorporated land. We serve a large and diverse area and population, from Vashon island to the Enumclaw plateau to the city of Seattle to the Snoqualmie Valley.



PURPOSE

The King Conservation District is dedicated to...

- Teaching the latest knowledge and principles of land and water conservation to landowners and the general public, through technical assistance, educational services and information materials,
- Encouraging the development of comprehensive action plans and procedures that promote environment quality,
- Facilitating cooperative and productive relationships between individual landowners and environmental regulatory agencies and non profit organizations,
- Providing technical and financial assistance to individuals and local governments on the implementation of sound conservation projects.



King County has the highest horse population in Washington and has over 1,000 farms for approximately 42,000 acres total land area.

VALUES

All District work, policies and programs are guided by the following principles. These core beliefs articulate how we strive to work with people and conduct our operations.

Land and Water Stewardship - We support local working lands as they benefit the community and natural resources. We lead efforts to protect sustainable farming and work to find solutions to land use problems and conflicts. We support wildlife, fish, water and land conservation efforts.

Collaborative and Cooperative Leadership - We work with all types of people in good faith regardless of political, religious, or cultural affiliations. We partner whenever possible with other local agencies and groups and in the tradition of conservation districts we refer to all our clients as “cooperators”.

Responsive and Responsible Government - We are non-bureaucratic, responsive to the public and customer service oriented. We maintain a can-do attitude and work one-on-one with local landowners to accomplish natural resource management goals. We are sensitive to traditional uses of the land and community traditions and heritage.

Prudent Financial Management - We conduct our business with the highest possible level of fiscal responsibility and integrity. We believe in cost-effective programs and a common sense approach to stretching conservation dollars as far as possible.

Community Based Activities - We are vested and rooted in the local region and believe in long term relationships with local residents, groups and the communities in which we work and live. As a public agency, we have a solid reputation and we are proud of our reputation and heritage of over 50 years of local conservation work.



GOALS AND INITIATIVES

During the coming years, the King Conservation District will address three distinct initiatives, which provide opportunities for enhancing our efforts in environmental conservation. We will; 1) work to enhance sustainable local agricultural resources, 2) Provide leadership in implementing on-the-ground environmental conservation practices in both the urban and rural environment, and 3) Direct District funds for prioritized work programs and maintain our financial stability by increasing our community presence and outreach efforts.

1) CONSERVATION PRACTICES LEADERSHIP

Anticipation/Outlook. Conservation practices that promote sustainable land use and water quality will continue to emerge as driving forces in shaping the quality of life throughout King County. Knowledgeable individuals and agencies in the conservation arena will be called upon to play a leadership role both in helping to outline a vision for the future of the county and in coordinating the work of the individuals and agencies that will be charged with promoting of sound conservation practices. We will need to be prepared to encourage the use of sound conservation practices in newly developing areas, while preserving the county's most valuable open spaces and natural habitats. Opportunities for restoration of degraded natural systems will continue to be abundant and our assistance highly desired by the public.

Strategy. The District is now a partner in county-wide and regional planning and will make a long-term assessment of the conservation issues that the county will face in the decade ahead and cooperatively assist stakeholders and other concerned agencies in developing action programs to address those issues. As these action plans are developed, the KCD will bring its technical expertise to bear on finding and implementing solutions. The district will also continue to play an important leadership role at the grassroots level through its programs for landowners.



Actions and work programs. The responsible use, maintenance and restoration of natural resources in rural and urban settings is an increasingly vital part of county-wide environmental management. The District will deliver general and technical information to rural and urban landowners on land use and water quality management including the restoration and protection of wildlife habitats in rural and urban settings, environmentally sound management practices for yards and gardens, “return to the land” initiatives such as the Pea-patch farming, minimizing land slides and other erosion, and the social context of conservation practices. Target audiences will include: owners of rural residences on non-agricultural acreage, owners of rural residences in planned developments, owners of urban residential lots, and owners of rural and urban light density commercial land.



- **Natural Habitat Protection and Restoration.** The King Conservation District will provide information and assistance to landowners, businesses owners, and other citizens in rural and urban areas on the preservation and restoration of natural habitats including the creation of low-maintenance native plant habitats that conserve water and are friendly to wildlife, eco-landscaping, establishing naturescaping demonstration sites, invasive species management, and community stewardship. We will continue to run our wetland plant cooperative as an educational center and research center.
- **Educational and Volunteer Opportunities.** Each of the KCD’s rural and urban initiatives will include an educational outreach and volunteer component. Individual and group meetings, and informational publications will be developed to promote each project and program with target audiences and the general public. The KCD will also organize volunteers to help with the implementation of many elements of these programs. In addition, the KCD will serve as a referral service, coordinating contacts between landowners and stakeholders who are in need of assistance and other land use and conservation agencies.
- **Backyard conservation and urban initiatives.** The district will assist suburban and city landowners in practicing conservation practices that are applicable to more developed areas. We will continue to pursue cost sharing for
- **Community outreach.** We will celebrate our good work and recognize citizens and landowners that make a difference in providing public benefits and sound enhancement and protection of our working lands. Using modern software we will expand our electronic mailing lists, improve our website to reach more people. We will utilize local city and county television to broadcast our activities to reach wider and more diverse audiences within the District.

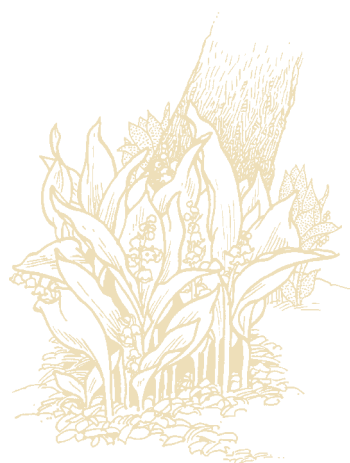
2) SUSTAINABLE LOCAL AGRICULTURE

Anticipation/Outlook. A big challenge facing the District is maintaining and enhancing our working farms, forests and other private lands with the increasing urbanization and population growth of King County. Preserving small-scale local agriculture is highly valued by the District, the public and political leaders. The District will find ways to assist agricultural operations comply with increasing land use regulations and salmon protection while maintaining viable operations.

Strategy. The District will work with business, government and community leaders in identifying, reviewing and responding to proposed and existing land use actions. As an advocate for sound conservation practices, the District will help these agencies understand agricultural issues and develop new action programs, processes and technology to promote effective and workable solutions.



Actions and work programs. The King Conservation District will provide farm operators, and other local agricultural operations and tenants the information, educational programs and financial and technical assistance they need to meet their land use objectives while being good stewards of land and water resources. Action areas will include: Encouraging Sustainable Farm Management Practices, Promoting Natural Habitat Protection and Restoration, and complying and / or modifying local land use regulations to be more cost effective and practical. The District will actively seek public and stakeholder support and public and private funding to sustain these programs.



- ***Farm Management Planning and Implementing Best Management Practices.*** The District will deliver general and technical information to the owners and managers of farms through the development of detailed Farm Management Plans, and provide opportunities for Cost Share through the Federal Farm Bill. These action plans will give the landowner a detailed assessment and strategy for promoting sustainable agriculture through efficient and environmentally sound land and resource management practices, including water quality assurance and conservation, manure management, mud management, fencing, pasture management, stable management, and addressing concerns about odors that are the byproducts of agricultural operations.
- ***Natural Habitat Protection and Restoration.*** The King Conservation District staff will work with citizens, landowners, and businesses in agricultural areas to help protect and restore farmland, forest land, stream, wetlands, and other sensitive natural habitats that threatened by encroachment. It will also review and respond to land use actions, assist landowners in slope stabilization and streambank soil erosion, and help to protect and conserve water resources.
- ***Education, policy and outreach.*** Individual and group meetings, and informational publications will be developed to promote each District project and program with target audiences and the general public. The KCD will also organize volunteers to help with the implementation of many elements of these programs. The KCD will also seek to partner with farming, environmental, and other organizations to promote stewardship successes in the agricultural community and develop new programs to improve sustainability of agriculture in King County. In addition, the KCD will serve as a referral service, coordinating contacts between landowners who are in need of assistance and other land use and conservation agencies and stakeholders. We will continue to work on ensuring that the best available science is incorporated into land use regulations and ordinances.

3) DISTRICT FINANCIAL STABILITY, FUNDING AND COMMUNITY PRESENCE

Anticipation/Outlook. The long-term financial stability and future funding of the King Conservation District from federal, state, county and private sources will require the District to rededicate itself to its core mission, responsibilities and initiatives and then clearly communicate the importance of these activities to potential funders, political leaders and stakeholders. The District's reliance on directed grants will weaken its ability to set its own comprehensive action agenda and obtain program stability.

Strategy. Increase the visibility of the District in both the urban and rural community. Pursue traditional sources of local funding and work with WACD on state wide lobbying efforts that make legislatures aware of what CD's can do to address difficult natural resource issues. Work to obtain funding from the current federal Farm Bill to implement needed cost share practices.



Actions and work programs. The District will actively work to maintain a special assessment in King County of 5 \$ per parcel. We will look at ways to best allocate the revenue between the district, member cities and watershed forums to respond to changing demands placed on the District.

The District will actively seek public and stakeholder support and public and private funding to sustain these programs.



- **Administration.** The King Conservation District Board of Supervisors will continue to review the role, responsibilities and composition of the Board and consider recommending modifications that will help increase Board visibility in the community, including a review of the current mechanism for electing Board members. The King Conservation District will attract and retain a dynamic staff and management structure that will enable it to meet new challenges.
- **Finance.** The King Conservation District Board will continue its practice of making available to the public complete and understandable financial statements. Appropriate technology and approved public budgeting methodologies will be used and expanded as appropriate, to meet the District's growing needs.
- **Community Outreach.** We will celebrate our good work and recognize citizens and landowners that make a difference in providing public benefits and sound enhancement and protection of our working lands. Using modern software we will expand our electronic mailing lists, improve our website to reach more people. WE will utilize local city and county television to broadcast our activities to each wider and more diverse audiences within the District.
- **PR Marketing Campaign and Political Affairs Program.** We will develop a marketing and public relations campaign and a political affairs program. The KCD will organize a political action sub-committee to develop an action agenda and policies on the state and local level.



CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES:

- § Water Quality & Quantity
- § Economical Viability of Land Use Practices
- § Habitat, Open Space (forest, wetland)
Protection & Enhancement
- § Behavior of King County residents and
organizations

Stewardship & Information / Education
as a part of each above

CRITICAL GEOGRAPHIC AREAS:

- § Snoqualmie Watershed (WRIA 7 & APD)
- § Enumclaw Plateau (WRIA 9 & APD)

STATEMENTS OF INTENT & OBJECTIVES - 2 & 6 YEAR:

WATER QUALITY & QUANTITY

By 2014 surface water quality in KCD priority geographic areas will meet or exceed TMDL standards for sediment, fecal coliform, dissolved oxygen, nitrates, and temperature and water quantity will be sufficient to support flow levels for salmon

2 Year Objectives

- § Focus program emphasis on 2 selected TMDL watersheds
- § Participate in implementing the county ground water management plans for two selected basins

6 Year Objectives

- § Insure that water quality monitoring is done to evaluate success of programs, inform future actions,
- § Establish a shared water quality resource profile - will show the trends for program emphasis
- § Respond to new TMDL watershed plans

ECONOMICAL VIABILITY OF LAND USE PRACTICES

By 2010, KCD will implement new and needed programs to support the economic viability of 10,000 agriculture and/or forest land operations that are environmentally sustainable

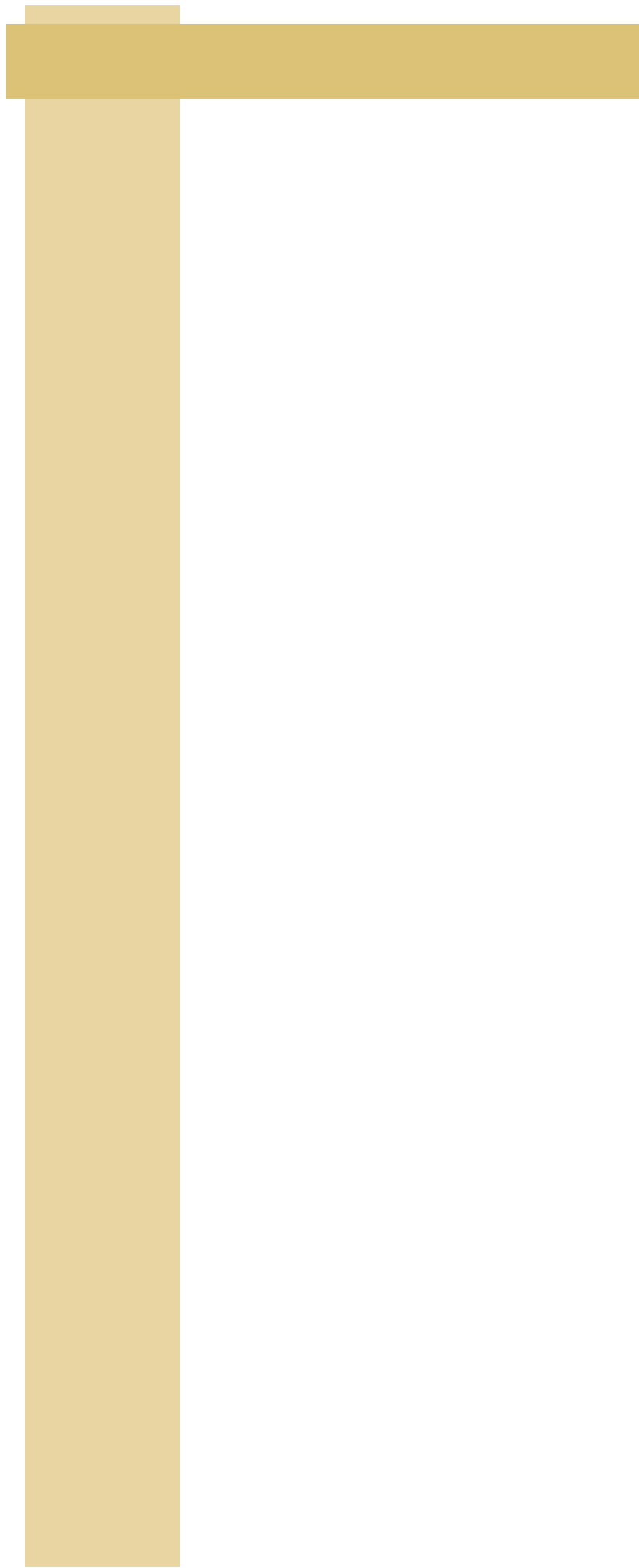
2 Year Objectives

- § Provide or secure funding to reinvigorate the Puget Sound “Fresh” program
- § Partner with any organization on “Salmon Safe” or similar labeling for local agriculture and forest products

6 Year Objectives

- § Seek out and initiate new and innovative programs and technologies that promote economically viable agriculture and forest land operations – in 6 years there will be 2 new programs / technologies
- § Support the expansion of existing and the development of new farmer’s markets and CSAs





STATEMENTS OF INTENT & OBJECTIVES - 2 & 6 YEAR: (cont'd)

HABITAT, OPEN SPACE (FORESTS, WETLANDS)

PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENT

By 2014, habitat open space will be protected and enhanced to support wildlife populations and biodiversity resulting in delisting of salmon

2 Year Objectives

§ Provide or secure \$2 million funding to run a cost share program that implements habitat and open space enhancement projects

6 Year Objectives

- § By 2010, all cooperators in KCD priority geographic areas will implement at least one habitat/open space protection/enhancement project.
- § Support the development of a natural resource inventory that describes the natural resource conditions and needs of KCD.
- § Identify and prioritize habitat areas for protection or enhancement of habitat and open space projects and offer assistance

BEHAVIOR OF KING COUNTY RESIDENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

By 2014 King County residents will choose to proactively implement conservation practices in their personal lives

2 Year Objectives

- § Provide marketing and outreach of district programs to reach new audiences
- § Monitor and follow-up to determine BMP installations to determine progress
- § Increase mailing list by 1000 names
- § Partner with 5 other organizations to increase outreach activities

6 Year Objectives

- § By 2010, behavior of residents will be improved to foster stewardship so that 2000 land users implement 5000 BMP per year
- § Monitor and follow-up to determine BMP installations to determine progress
- § Increase mailing list by 5000 names

Board of Supervisors

District Chair: Max Prinsen
Vice-Chair: Scott Wallace
Secretary/Auditor: Lynn Sullivan
Member: Bobbi Lindemulder
Member: Richard Gelb

KCD Office:

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KCD e-mail address: district@kingcd.org

Web Site: <http://www.kingcd.org>

WA Conservation Commission

www.scc.wa.gov



Volunteer Groups

Boeing Company
Renton High School
Northwood Junior HS-Earth Science
8th Grade Class
WashingtonNativePlantSociety
Microsoft
PS Adventist Academy
Mt Rainier High School
Camp Fire Boys and Girls
Friends of the Black River Riparian Forest
Carleton College Alumni
Hazen High School Green Team
Student Conservation Association
Nelson Middle School

Local Agencies and Non-Profit Partners

King County
City of Seattle
34 Member Cities
MPSFEG
PFPS
IMAPAL
WashingtonNativePlantSociety
HorsesForCleanWater
WSDA
USDA NRCS
Earth Corps
SCA
WSU Cooperative Extension
Cascade Land Conservation
SHADOW
Stewardship Partners
VM Land Trust??
NOAA
Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
PSWQA
WADNR
Audubon Society
University of WA
??
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