

King Conservation District

2015 Program Focus Areas – FACT SHEET

OVERVIEW



Challenge: King County communities must develop resilience in the face of current and future population pressures and changing weather. King County and the Northwest find themselves facing dual challenges from climate change. As we adapt to more frequent and intense weather events and the everyday consequences of rainier winters and drier summers, we simultaneously must face that our natural resources and future climate are increasingly attractive to outsiders. We must plan not only for our climate to change but for a significant increase in our population as well.

Need: Programs and services that build community and environmental capacity to produce healthy food, expand forest resources and urban green infrastructure, improve and protect water quality, and create habitat will protect our region's quality of life now and into the future.

The Problem

As the effects of climate change begin to be felt in common and extraordinary ways, our region and nation have begun to grapple with an environmental crisis of unprecedented proportions. Simultaneously, rising poverty rates and systemic obstacles create barriers to healthy fresh food for the region's low-income residents. Finally, population and development pressures have altered our natural environment to the brink – and sometimes beyond – of what our ecosystems can bear.

People in the Pacific Northwest have a love affair with the natural world – early in 2014, King County residents passed a \$400 million Parks levy dedicated to preserving, expanding, and maintaining the County's 200 parks, 175 miles of trails, and 26,000 acres of open space. We hold the quality of life we enjoy from our natural resources dear.



Those resources are at risk. Decades of inadequate funding and attention have left many of our state and local programs unable to meet the needs a growing population and a changing climate have created.

Conservation Districts were created at the center of our nation's first national environmental crisis – the dust bowl. Our unique mission places us squarely in the center of many human-natural resource intersections. It's our job to help people understand why a healthy environment is essential *to them* and then give them the tools they need to do something about it, especially on

the nearly 50% of land that's under their direct control. Growing stewards is what conservation districts do – wherever those stewards may be – on the farm, in urban backyards, or working alongside friends to restore a stream or park.

We provide broad messaging to elevate natural resource conservation among a diverse constituency. We teach workshops and host farm tours to bring essential information on stewardship to interested people. And we work hand-in-hand, often bringing financial resources, with landowners to help them steward natural resources on their land for the public's benefit. Education, technical assistance, and cost-share. It's how conservation districts help people build better ground.

In the face of climate change impacts, food production and access barriers, and development pressures on the natural environment, King Conservation District stands ready with our partners to leverage the region's existing expertise and passion for *this place* and make a difference.

What's New

The 2013 King Conservation District/King County Conservation Panel and Task Force roundtables examined the region's existing programs and identified specific needs that were not being addressed in natural resource conservation. They directed the King Conservation District to develop proposals to create or expand our work in the following areas:

- **Rural Small Lot Forestry and Urban Tree Canopy Enhancement**
- **Regional Food System and Sustainable Agriculture**
- **Rural Farm Plans, Technical Assistance, and Regulatory Support**
- **Urban Farm Plans, Technical Assistance and Regulatory Support**
- **Shoreline and Riparian Education and Technical Assistance**
- **Expanded Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)**

In 2014, King Conservation District invited participants of the 2013 roundtables, plus a few new faces, to form a new **KCD Advisory Committee** and help us craft the future. Members and alternates include elected officials or senior staff from the following organizations:

City of Bellevue	King Conservation District	Seattle Tilth
City of Carnation	King County Executive	Sustainable Seattle
City of Issaquah	King County Council	Futurewise
City of Lake Forest Park	King County Agriculture Commission	Private Urban Landowners
City of Redmond	King County Forestry Commission	Private Rural Landowners
City of Seattle	Muckleshoot Tribe	
City of Shoreline		
City of Tukwila		

In the *Program Area Focus* fact sheets, KCD outlines the proposals it developed in collaboration with its Advisory Committee. In all, the new and expanded programs deliver nearly \$3M of resources to local rural and urban green infrastructure, regional food production and access, freshwater and marine shoreline restoration, and habitat expansion and protection. **We invite and appreciate feedback, suggestions, and questions through July 28, 2014. Please email: Deirdre.grace@kingcd.org**

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Rural Small Lot Forestry & Urban Tree Canopy Development



Challenge: As climate change and population growth pressures mount, the health of Pacific Northwest Forests is threatened.

Need: Individual jurisdictions and agencies do not have the resources to adequately protect our forests without mobilizing private landowners. The demand to train and support owners of small forest properties to safeguard our regional forest resources is immediate and essential.

The Problem

As recently as 2009, over 45,000 acres of the nearly 782,000 acres of rural non-commercial forest lands outside King County's Agriculture Production Districts were held by landowners of parcels of five acres or less in size. These small, non-commercial forested lands fall outside the capacity of the King County forestry program for support. Yet together, these acres represent a vast resource that contributes to the overall health of our community and offers a timely opportunity to proactively engage private landowners in stewardship.

Healthy trees and forests are just as essential in urban communities. Recent research by King County reveals an alarming drop in urban trees in many communities at a time when more, not fewer, trees are intensely needed: As growth management concentrates development in urban areas and the regional commitment to social justice and equity is institutionalized, management and enhancement of healthy urban forests and tree canopies emerges as a necessity. Urban forestry programs are focusing on quality of life indicators and urban heat islands and additionally addressing wildlife habitats in the cities, stormwater management, water quality protection, pollution abatement, and carbon sequestration.

"The combined impacts of increasing wildfire, insect outbreaks, and tree diseases are already causing widespread tree die-off and are virtually certain to cause additional forest mortality by the 2040s."

Climate Change Impacts in the United States – Northwest May, 2014

Current Program Outcomes	Proposed Additional Program Outcomes
<p>Rural - annual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25-40 forested acres treated • 2,000-3,000 native trees and shrubs planted • \$28,986 private funds leveraged 	<p>Rural - annual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest acres treated and planted increased to 225 acres. • 18,000-36,000 native trees and shrubs planted on forest land • Increase private sector funding leveraged on forest health management to \$144,900 • A minimum of 18 small acreage forest landowners engaged in planning and implementing management practices through KCD technical services • At least 1 WSU Coached Forest Stewardship Workshop per year in King County. Allocate \$150,000 in KCD LIP forest health management cost-share funding for contracts awarded to small acreage non-industrial private forest landowners to management practices (increase to 10 contracts, and \$60,000 to \$150,000).
<p>Urban - annual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 upland acres treated • \$14,500 in plants and other project materials provided to landowners and neighborhood groups through KCD technical service programs for implementation of urban forest/open space enhancement projects. • \$144,000 leveraged (mostly in-kind labor) in association with urban forest/open space enhancement projects supported by KCD. 	<p>Urban - annual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban forest/upland acres treated and planted increased to 14 acres. • Native trees and shrubs planted on urban forest/upland habitat increased to 34,400. • Private sector funding leveraged on urban forest/upland health management increased to \$324,400 • Facilitate roundtables in three jurisdictions annually to develop tailored urban forest initiatives. In turn, market services and facilitate outreach and educational opportunities to promote the retention and restoration of urban forests; facilitate community forestry activities through technical support. • Work with 3 new jurisdictions annually in a support and/or coordination role to plan and implement urban forest retention and restoration programs. • Allocate \$150,000 (\$50,000 per jurisdiction) in KCD LIP cost-share funding for contracts awarded to urban residents and neighborhood and community groups to implement management practices consistent with urban forest initiatives adopted by the respective jurisdictions.

CURRENT:	PROPOSED ADDITION:	PROPOSED TOTAL:
.14 FTE	2 FTE 1 AmeriCorps Intern	2.14 FTE 1 AmeriCorps Intern
\$17,430	\$302,224	\$319,654

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Deirdre Grace, Community Relations Manager

King Conservation District

Deirdre.grace@kingcd.org

425-282-1902



King Conservation District

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Regional Food System and Sustainable Agriculture



Challenge: The Local Food System should connect healthy food consumption with healthy local farming practices, but it is under stress:

- Food deserts and a lack of access to healthy food in our underserved communities are growing concerns.
- The ability of farmers to launch, sustain, and expand local production, and to invest in long term conservation practices, is threatened by an already low-return business that has experienced steady declines in revenues for over a decade.
- At the same time, we are asking farmers to be leaders in helping to solve public natural resource crises, including salmon recovery, water quality, and climate change.

NEED: Significant, regional investments throughout the food system to: improve food access, invest in local food system as an economic growth sector, begin to address storage and processing obstacles, strengthen direct market connections at farmers markets, CSAs, and more. A healthy local food system means healthier people, healthier farms, and healthier natural resources.

The Problem

Strengthening the regional food economy was perhaps the most discussed and ultimately the highest priority of the 2013 King Conservation District/King County Conservation Panel and Task Force. The discussion focused on enhancing the regional food system through a combination of initiatives, grants, and synergy with existing or expanded KCD services.

King County farmers produced \$120 million worth of food in 2012, down from \$127 million in 2007, ranking 18th of the state's 39 counties. King County consumers, however, spend \$6 billion on food, including \$600 million on raw food. Demand for fresh locally-grown food is growing, but social, economic, and infrastructural obstacles stand in the way. Price points for food that deliver a living wage to farmers while remaining affordable to a broad consumer base prove elusive in the absence of some market

"By addressing food system issues systematically, the region can protect agricultural land, promote fresh food consumption, and support local food and farm based business to improve the health of the local food economy."
- Puget Sound Regional Council -
VISION 2040

intervention. Processing and storage facilities are few, creating farm-to-market challenges for small farmers. Institutional buyers such as hospitals and school districts have not yet embraced local suppliers in a meaningful way.

These obstacles suggest a need for public sector innovation. Though local food stories are ubiquitous and celebrated chefs increasingly highlight sustainability and seasonality in their menus and preparation, the fact remains that farmers are, paradoxically, simply not sharing in the renaissance. The most recent survey of King County farmers found that incomes in the sector are declining.

The King Conservation District is uniquely positioned to coordinate and leverage a range of projects, programs, and services we and our partners are already well-equipped to deploy.

The Future

We propose to work with our member jurisdictions, King County, Seattle Tilth, Cascade Harvest Coalition, Pike Place Market, the Puget Sound Regional Food Council, and others across the food system spectrum to reduce obstacles on the farm, during processing and storage, within distribution channels, and at market. We will build on existing success, such as Seattle Tilth’s Farm Works in Auburn, and work together to innovate new pilot programs to learn from and adapt.

Current Program Outcomes	Proposed Additional Program Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, KCD is involved in a variety of regional roundtables and policy bodies examining ways to grow and maintain a sustainable agricultural economy. KCD is partnering with the City of Auburn, Auburn International Farmers Market, Seattle Tilth, Auburn Food Bank, and Washington CAN to implement Good Food Bag Market Bucks for low-income shoppers to use at the Farmers Market this summer. 	<p>KCD proposes to develop and administer a robust program of grants and services that address the following regional goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve food access Invest in local food system as an economic growth sector Begin to address storage and processing obstacles Strengthen direct market connections at farmers markets Expand CSAs

CURRENT:	PROPOSED ADDITION:	PROPOSED TOTAL:
.2 FTE	2 FTE	2.2 FTE
\$20,880	\$1,075,620	\$1,096,500

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Deirdre Grace, Community Relations Manager
King Conservation District
Deirdre.grace@kingcd.org
 425-282-1902



Photo Courtesy Seattle Tilth

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Urban Sustainable Agriculture



Challenge: An equitable local food economy includes urban food production, both commercial and personal. Urban farmers and gardeners have unique needs for land stewardship guidance to ensure a viable, diverse local food system that cares for our soils and waters for future generations.

Need: Existing urban agricultural organizations are under-funded to meet the demand to develop sustainable urban small-lot food production and provide training and support for low-income and immigrant populations, who would benefit most from expanded urban agricultural opportunities.

The Problem

Food deserts exist within the City of Seattle and parts of south King County. Food deserts are defined by the US Department of Agriculture as urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options. The lack of access contributes to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.

Part of the solution is to strengthen farms across King County and develop better transportation, storage, and processing infrastructure. Another part of a healthy local food system is to develop opportunities to grow fresh food within urban boundaries, especially in communities that are transit-dependent, low-income, or comprised of primarily immigrant populations.

Agriculture in urban areas provides exposure, outreach, and connections for urban residents to connect to the agricultural economy, the food system, and the environment through their placement within dense communities. Urban farmers benefit from lower transportation costs for themselves and their products, as well as community based support. These factors make urban agriculture a more viable option for low income and immigrant communities that can benefit this proximity to community support and the consumer market.

“1 in 5 children in King County is food insecure.”

- *Communities Count, 2012*

The Future

We propose to work with our member jurisdictions, King County, Seattle Tilth, Cascade Harvest Coalition, Pike Place Market, the Puget Sound Regional Food Council, and others across the food system spectrum to identify strategies to develop urban agricultural opportunities. We will build on existing success, such as Seattle Tilth's Farm Works in Auburn and Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands in south Seattle as models of success and work together to innovate new pilot programs to learn from and adapt.

Current Program Outcomes	Proposed Additional Program Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve up to 5 urban farm service customers annually • Deliver 1-5 urban livestock-related farm plans annually (for regulatory compliance) • Participate in regional food system coordination initiatives (as available) • Provide soil testing support to over 500 new urban farmer/ gardeners annually to promote sound water quality related soil fertility management (this service has been growing steadily since starting in 2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess regional need for urban farming-related natural resource planning support through coordination with member jurisdictions and the KCD Advisory Committee • Continue to market and expand soil fertility services to promote responsible fertilizer practices (Increase gardener involvement by at least 100 more new gardeners annually) • Coordinate urban farm planning services with coordinated regional food system initiatives with member cities and county • Develop soil testing program and customers into a more comprehensive urban conservation program focused on growing healthy local food and protecting and enhancing urban water quality • Develop 20 Urban Farm Plans per year. Plans will be developed across the District so that by year 5, at least 1-2 urban farm plans will be developed in every member jurisdiction.

CURRENT:	PROPOSED ADDITION:	PROPOSED TOTAL:
.05 FTE	1.6 FTE	1.65 FTE
\$13,871	\$177,929	\$191,800

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Deirdre Grace, Community Relations Manager
King Conservation District
Deirdre.grace@kingcd.org
 425-282-1902



Photo Courtesy Seattle Tilth

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Rural Sustainable Agriculture



Challenge: Farms can have key roles in solving regional and national natural resource concerns associated with water quality (Clean Water Act, 303d listings, TMDLs), salmon recovery (ESA listings and recovery plans), carbon sequestration to offset climate change impacts, and more. At current rates of funding, progress on solving these concerns is slower than desired.

Need: Precision targeting of technical support to address these concerns and technical assistance to remove barriers to farmer adoption of recommended best management practices (BMPs) through:

- *increased farmer awareness* of their potential role,
- *consistent access to technical support* to design and install best management practices, and
- *financial assistance* in some cases to offset high project costs, especially for BMPs with little to no farm return on investment.

The Problem

United States Dept. Of Agriculture statistics show that King County farmers produced \$120 million worth of Agricultural products in 2012. About \$90 million of that total are food products. The county ranks 18th in value of agricultural production of the state's 39 counties. King County consumers spend \$6 billion on food.

Farmers are the stewards of over 60,000 acres of farmed and farmable lands in King County. Enabling their stewardship of our shared water, soil, and habitat resources requires supporting those efforts in meaningful ways. Placing expensive regulatory burdens on farmers without committing the technical and financial resources to help land managers implement environmental practices runs the very real risk of losing that farmland to bankruptcy, abandonment, or development.

Conservation Districts play an important role in mitigating the effects of our changing climate. For example an acre of pasture can sequester an average of 280 tons of CO₂ annually. Using

"The agricultural lands within the region are among the most productive in the state, and the loss of good quality farmland has implications for air quality, water quality and quantity, and the region's self-sufficiency."
-The Puget Sound Regional Council

sustainable techniques such as those provided by the King Conservation District, this sequestration can be increased by over 2.5 tons/ acre annually. This means that over 90,000 additional tons of CO2 can be sequestered on the county's 20,000 acres of pastureland annually

The Future

King Conservation District proposes to increase its support of rural farmers through both increasing the number of plans to self-selected clients as well as expand current pilot efforts on sub-basin targeting to improve water, soil, and habitat quality in watersheds that exhibit poor benchmarks.

Current Program Outcomes	Proposed Additional Program Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving 150 farming customers (90% result in site visits to assess natural resource concerns and solutions) • Delivering 67 farm plans for 1000+ acres (20% regulatory referral; 25% Current Use/ PBRs referral; 55% stewardship only) • Following up on 160 plans to document implementation, which includes support navigating County, State, and Federal permitting systems • Providing technical support to dairy operators and the Washington State Dairy Association (WSDA) in association with WSDA nutrient management compliance inspections. About 15 inspections per year • Assisting 30 farms with manure spreader loan program annually, promoting the beneficial use of manure as a fertilizer at agronomic rates, minimizing water quality impacts of stock piling manure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a multi-year plan to deploy targeted farm planning services approach county wide to targeted natural resource concern areas . eg - Targeting water quality impaired sub-basins with significant commercial farming land use • Targeting 1 natural resource concern area for outreach each 2 years, ensuring a comprehensive approach to conservation • Serving 50 farming customers in targeted natural resource areas (90% result in site visits to assess natural resource concerns and solutions) annually • Delivering 20 farm plans in targeted natural resource areas annually

CURRENT:	PROPOSED ADDITION:	PROPOSED TOTAL:
5.36 FTE	1.6 FTE	6.96 FTE
\$571,885	\$153,929	\$725,814

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Deirdre Grace, Community Relations Manager
King Conservation District
Deirdre.grace@kingcd.org
 425-282-1902



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Shoreline and Riparian Habitat



Challenge: Efforts to restore the health of Puget Sound need the participation of private landowners who collectively own 2/3 of the shorelines. Landowner driven protection of our region's streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and marine shorelines will contribute to salmon runs and the overall health of Puget Sound.

Need: Individual jurisdictions and agencies do not have the resources to recover the health of aquatic systems without mobilizing private landowners. The demand for workshops, classes, tours, train-the-trainer, and one-on-one assistance is immediate and essential.

The Problem

A century of intensive logging, agriculture and urban development have degraded aquatic habitats throughout King County where more than 2/3 of the shoreline properties are held in private ownership. In 1999, Chinook salmon were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, prompting concerted efforts to restore and protect lakes, rivers and streams. Concern for the health of Puget Sound has focused increased attention on shoreline and near shore habitats. Working closely with private property owners whose lands abut freshwater and marine aquatic systems is an essential component of recovering the health of these systems. Support for increased educational assistance and capacity-building among shoreline property owners was recommended by the King Conservation District / King County Conservation Panel and Task Force.

King Conservation District engaged participants in an exploration of the challenges facing aquatic habitats in the District. King County's landscape is a diverse mosaic of mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, and marine habitats. The district's service area includes approximately 2,100 square miles of land, plus nearly 2,000 miles of freshwater and marine shorelines. Major watersheds include Cedar River-Lake Washington, Green-Duwamish, Sammamish, Snoqualmie-Skykomish, White River, and Central Puget Sound, including Vashon-Maury Island.

"The conservation and management of freshwater ecosystems are critical to the interests of all humans, nations, and governments."

Freshwater Institute, University of Washington, 2014

Current Program Outcomes	Proposed Additional Program Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.82 miles of shoreline replanted and enhanced annually. • 23.5 acres of riparian corridor replanted and enhanced annually. • 57,589 native trees and shrubs planted annually • 549 landowners, neighborhood groups and jurisdictions utilizing KCD technical service programs annually for implementation of aquatic area planting and enhancement practices. • 1 KCD LIP cost-share contract awarded annually to landowners, neighborhood groups and jurisdictions for implementation of aquatic area planting and enhancement practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.6 miles of shoreline replanted and enhanced annually. • 47 acres of riparian corridor replanted and enhanced annually. • 115,100 native trees and shrubs planted annually • A minimum of 220 freshwater aquatic area landowners engaged annually in learning about, planning and implementing aquatic area planting and enhancement practices • A minimum of 120 marine shoreline aquatic area landowners engaged annually in learning about, planning and implementing aquatic area planting and enhancement practices. • Increase to 20 the number of freshwater aquatic area planting and enhancement projects planned and implemented by KCD, thereby restoring a minimum of 5 acres and 1.8 miles per year on a combination of urban and rural residential lands • Increase to 8 the number of <i>Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program</i> projects planned and implemented per year, thereby restoring a minimum of 6 acres and 1.5 miles per year on agricultural lands. • Allocate \$112,500 annually in KCD LIP cost-share funding for contracts awarded to freshwater and marine aquatic area landowners to implement freshwater and marine shoreline planting and enhancement practices in urban and rural areas (an increase from 1 to 10 contracts, and \$11,250 to \$112,500).

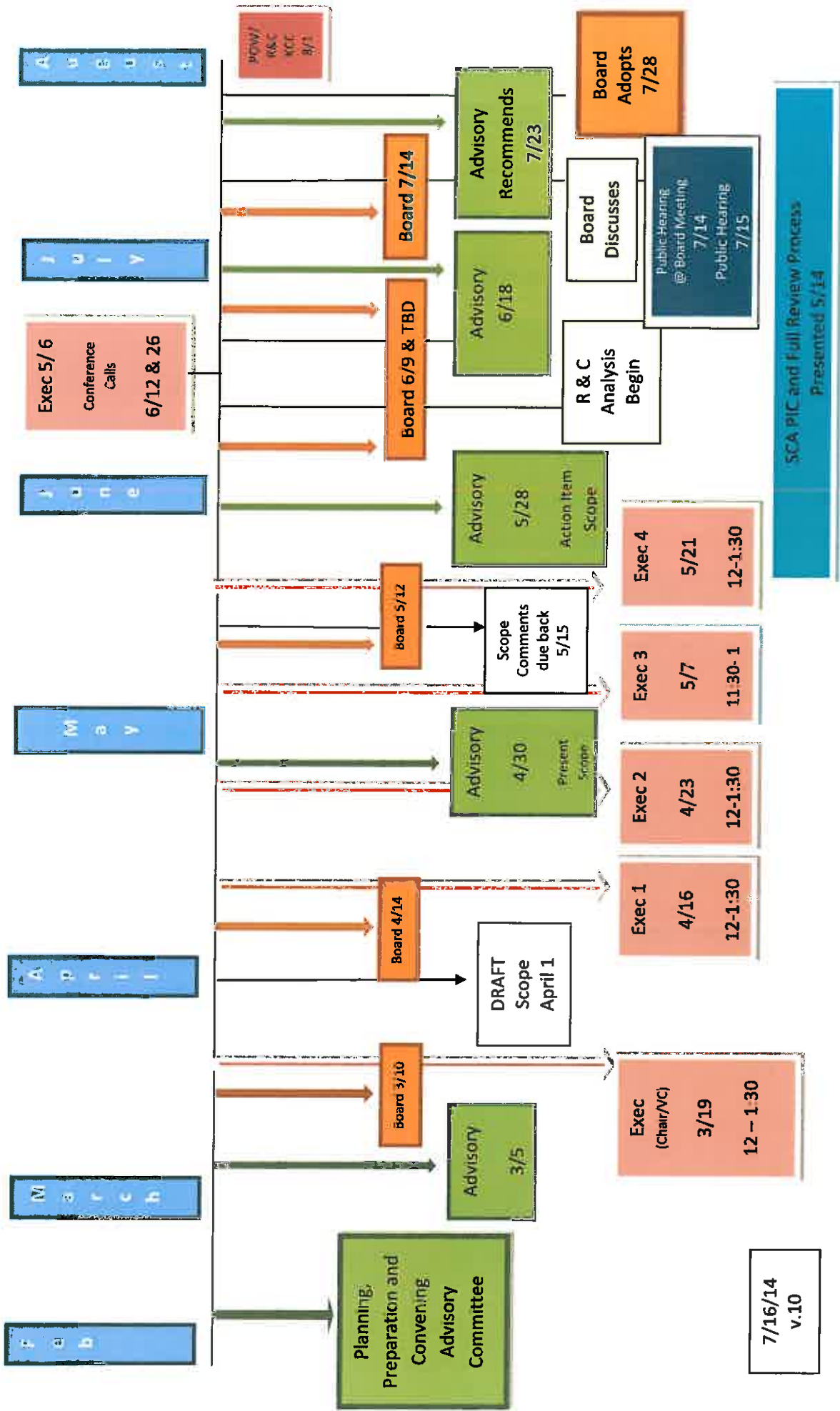
CURRENT:	PROPOSED ADDITION:	PROPOSED TOTAL:
<p style="text-align: center;">5 FTE .25 AmeriCorps Intern 1 WA Conservation Corps Crew</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2 FTE 1 AmeriCorps Intern 1 WA Conservation Corps Crew</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7 FTE 1.25 AmeriCorps Intern 2 WA Conservation Corps Crew</p>
\$674,594	\$603,992	\$1,278,586

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Deirdre Grace, Community Relations Manager
King Conservation District
Deirdre.grace@kingcd.org
425-282-1902

“In the coastal zone, the effects of sea level rise, erosion, inundation, threats to infrastructure and habitat, and increasing ocean acidity collectively pose a major threat to the region.”

Climate Change Impacts in the United States, May 2014



7/16/14
v.10

SCA PIC and Full Review Process
Presented 5/14

Draft Scoping Budget- 2015

6/10/2014

KCD Scoping Budget	Current Funded Level	Proposed Additional Costs	Expanded Funding Level
FOOD AND FARMING			
Local Food System	\$20,880	\$1,075,620	\$1,096,500
Rural Farm Planning Services	\$571,885	\$153,929	\$725,814
Urban Farm Planning Services	\$13,871	\$177,929	\$191,800
Forestry Services (urban/rural)	\$17,430	\$302,224	\$319,654
Shoreline and Riparian Services (urban/ rural)	\$674,594	\$603,992	\$1,278,586
Landowner Incentive Program (urban/rural)	\$277,306	\$559,876	\$837,182
Member Jurisdiction Grants & Services Program <i>including grant administration</i>	\$1,296,507		\$1,296,507
Communications, Outreach, Advisory Committee	\$404,999		\$404,999
TOTAL	\$3,277,472	\$2,873,570	\$6,151,042
Average per parcel Rate Collection	\$5.14	\$4.54	\$9.68

