



King Conservation District

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Local Food • Healthy Forests • Clean Water • Better Ground



# WHO WE ARE, HOW WE WORK

At King Conservation District, we work to build better ground. From better food to better backyards to better farms, we are here for you.

KCD was established in 1949 by the Washington Conservation Commission to empower landowners and managers to steward those lands in the public's interest. Conservation districts were created to address our nation's first environmental crisis – the Dust Bowl.

KCD is a metropolitan conservation district serving 34 cities and unincorporated King County with a total population of over two million people. Our funding comes primarily from a small per-parcel rate and charge. We are able to leverage these local dollars with state, federal, and foundation funds to partner with farmers, rural landowners, urban residents, volunteers, community-based organizations and our municipal partners.

Conservation districts are non-regulatory and work with people who are ready to implement best management practices (BMPs) on their property or in their communities. For our region to be resilient in the face of climate change, population growth, and other pressures, we must work together to re-build the natural resources that mitigate the demands of the built environment and support a vibrant and equitable local economy.

## Contents

<b>2020 Accomplishments</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>KCD ILA 2020 Benchmarks</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Engagement</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Outreach and Education</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Grants to Help Replenish Our Region</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Better Water</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Riparian Land Stewardship</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Rural Land Stewardship</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Riparian Restoration/Improvement</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Better Forests</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Wildfire Preparedness</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Urban Forest Stewardship</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Small Lot Forest Stewardship</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Better Food</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Regional Food System</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Agricultural Drainage Assistance</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Community Agriculture</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Better Backyards</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Landowner Incentive Program</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Native Plant Sale</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>KCD Native Plant Nursery</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Board of Supervisors</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Operations</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Appendix A: Budget Table</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix B: ILA Benchmarks</b>	<b>26</b>



# A TIME OF TRANSITION

## Letter from the Board Chair

KCD has undergone significant transition in 2020. Like the rest of the world, our organization faced the many challenges that came with a changing landscape due to COVID-19. At the same time, we went through significant leadership transition including the departure of our executive director.

Through it all, our district staff showed the flexibility and dedication that makes KCD the great organization it is. KCD staff quickly adapted to working from home, allowing them to continue planning and developing projects. As restrictions eased, staff were able to develop protocols that allowed them to get back in the field working with our cooperators safely and effectively.

In the end, KCD met or exceeded most of the 2020 benchmarks laid out in our interlocal agreement with King County. Where we were unable to meet benchmarks due to COVID-19, we fully expect to see improvement in 2021 as restrictions continue to ease and life begins to normalize. Not only were we able to meet most of our implementation goals – supporting farmers, restoring streamsides, and healing forests, but we found ways to innovate, and respond to the unique needs brought on by COVID-19.

We moved our education workshops online reducing barriers and setting record attendance. On short notice, our Native Plant Sale moved to a socially-distanced drive-through model distributing over 65,000 native plants to customers in record time. We set up a hotline to help farmers navigate the many services available to see them through the initial shock of

COVID-19. Our Regional Food System program released an additional \$100,000 to help connect local producers with food banks to respond to the spike in need. And, when our local greenhouse was shut down, KCD staff took culturally relevant seed starts into their homes to ensure that they would be available to go into community gardens across the county providing culturally relevant nourishment for immigrant and refugee gardeners.

I am excited about KCD's future. 2020 put pressure on the organization and revealed areas ready for change, but I believe that KCD has the foundation to make these changes and strengthen our efforts to support our cooperators and communities.



Burr Mosby, 2020-2021 Board Chair  
King Conservation District

At King Conservation District, we're all about better ground. Better ground means taking important stewardship actions at home and in our communities to create healthy soil and water, to provide healthy food, and to conserve land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources. And you don't have to go it alone. You have a partner, your local conservation district.

## 2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**22,670**

Native Trees and Shrubs Planted

**65,000**

Native Plants Distributed  
Through Native Plant Sale

**55 ACRES**

Forest Stewarded

**2 MILES**

Shorelines Habitat Improved

**12 ACRES**

Shoreline Stewarded

**260**

Volunteer Hours Donated

**300+**

Stewards Educated

**3000+**

Engaged Through Outreach

**\$325,000**

Cost-share to Help Individuals  
Implement Conservation Practices

**\$560,000**

Awarded to Bolster Our  
Regional Food System

**>\$1 MILLION**

Awarded to Member Jurisdictions for  
Natural Resource Education, Outreach,  
and Improvements

**5 CITIES**

Partnered With to Improve  
Urban Tree Canopy

**7**

Communities Partnered with  
to Reduce Wildfire Risks

**233 ACRES**

Covered by Wildfire Risk Assessments

**34**

Equipment Loans to Help Farmers

**44**

Farm Conservation Plans Written

**95 ACRES**

Farmland Production  
Improved and Restored

# KCD ILA 2020 BENCHMARKS

KCD receives the majority of its funding through rates and charges administered by King County as laid out in a 2020-2024 interlocal agreement. This agreement includes annual benchmarks to assess the progress KCD programs are making towards programmatic work goals. The table below represents the progress KCD programs made towards their benchmarks in 2020. Despite 2020 challenges, KCD met or exceeded 20 of 29 benchmarks. KCD mostly met (>70% progress) 3 benchmarks, partially met (>50% progress) 3 benchmarks, and did not meet 3 benchmarks. KCD met or exceeded many of our habitat improvement metrics including cooperators engaged, projects implemented, and technical assistance provided.

Challenges for 2020 stemmed largely from Covid-19 disruptions and often reduced KCD's ability to distribute funds and facilitate new relationships. Rural Land Stewardship did not meet its target for cost-sharing new projects. Agricultural Drainage work was down due to rehiring for the position. Urban Forest Stewardship was not able to convene a Request for Proposals in 2020 due to Covid-19. KCD will be able to carry forward unspent cost-share and grant funds to distribute on new projects in future years, and we expect to increase the number of benchmarks met in 2021.

Priority	Program	Benchmarks	
Local Food	Regional Food System Grants	Mostly Met	
	Agricultural Drainage	Partially Met	
	Community Agriculture	Met	
Clean Water	Riparian Land Stewardship	Mostly Met	
	Rural Land Stewardship	Mostly Met	
	Riparian Restoration	Exceeded	
Healthy Forests	Wildfire Preparedness	Met	
	Urban Forest Stewardship	Not Met	
	Small Lot Forest Stewardship	Exceeded	
	Member Jurisdiction Grants	Exceeded	
	Elections	Met	

\*For a full breakdown of KCD ILA Benchmarks see Appendix B on page 26.



## OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

KCD Outreach and Education Programs work to empower King County residents to become better stewards of their natural resources by building awareness of beneficial conservation practices and connecting people with KCD programs and resources.

COVID-19 was highly disruptive to planned Outreach and Education events. However, KCD staff were able to retool and refocus efforts to accommodate COVID-19 protocols before the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order went into effect, and to offer online workshops throughout the rest of the year.

### Orca Recovery Day

In 2020, Conservation Districts spearheaded the Third Annual Orca Recovery Day. While most in-person events were canceled, Orca Recovery Day held a month long ecochallenge where teams across Washington competed to complete personal conservation actions to increase recycling, reduce pollution, and restore nature. These actions were selected to educate and connect people with conservation practices that increase water quality and benefit struggling Orca Populations in the Puget Sound and across the West. In 2021, Orca Recovery Day will again hold in-person volunteer events.

### Northwest Flower & Garden Show

In 2020, KCD partnered with NW Bloom EcoLogical Landscapes to build an award-winning model show garden for the Northwest Flower and Garden Show. This demonstration garden highlighted conservation practices people can readily take in their own yard including 85 native and edible plant species, composting bins, rain gardens, and pollinator habitat. The Northwest Flower & Garden Show has over 60,000 attendees, and the garden saw over 3,000 direct interactions between curious visitors and KCD staff on conservation.





## Education Workshops and Tours

KCD education programs include service learning and volunteer opportunities and classes, workshops, tours and other field-based learning opportunities that focus on water quality protection, soil conservation, livestock management, shoreline habitat improvement, and fish and wildlife habitat enhancement. Audiences served by KCD education programs include adult livestock owners, agriculture operators, and rural, urban, and suburban landowners, as well as youth and children.

## Envirothon

Envirothon is a nationwide environmental literacy competition for high school youth. KCD participates in the Washington State Envirothon program by recruiting high school teams from King County to participate in the Northwest regional, state, and national Envirothon competitions. Envirothon was canceled in 2020, but will be back in 2021.

## Volunteer

KCD's Volunteer Program supports KCD engagement activities as well as implementation of conservation efforts. It increases public awareness of all KCD programs and services and offers volunteers knowledge about local natural resource management, such as restoration of watershed functions, and hands-on experience implementing practices to address those concerns. Program goals focus on recruiting and connecting new volunteers to project-based learning opportunities and building partnerships with agencies and organizations to address mutual service-learning goals. The volunteer program was put on pause during COVID-19.



## Program Outcomes for 2020

**34 Education and Engagement Events Conducted**

**60 Marine Shoreline Residents Educated**

**48 Stream and Lakeside Residents Educated**

**49 Rural Stewards Educated**

**200+ Additional Stewards Educated**

**79 Volunteers Contributed**

**260 Volunteer Hours**

**3,000+ Engaged Through Outreach Events**



Photo Credit: Young Women Empowered (Y-WE) at Marra Farm

## GRANTS TO HELP REPLENISH OUR REGION

KCD sets aside \$1.2 million each year of collected rates and charges funds for our 35 member jurisdictions. A portion of those funds is available for each jurisdiction based on the number of parcels collected from within that city. Jurisdictions may elect to apply for a grant to implement projects or to contract directly with KCD to deliver project services. Jurisdictions may accrue funds from year-to-year in order to support larger projects, and they may also partner with each another to leverage resources to implement conservation projects. Activities eligible for funding through this program include the direct improvement of natural resource conditions, education and outreach, pilot and demonstration projects, and projects that build capacity. Seattle Grants have an explicit focus on funding projects that are led by, or in deep partnership with, communities disproportionately impacted by environmental injustice and systematic racism.

### Program Accomplishments for 2020

In 2020, KCD awarded \$1,088,695, for 20 projects in 11 jurisdictions. We worked to be flexible with grantees around extending timelines as groups struggled to adapt to the uncertainty of 2020. We also allowed groups to adapt planned work to address pressing community food needs.

### Program Outcomes for 2020

Program outcomes look at the long-term impacts our work has creating behavior changes in our partners and leaving a lasting benefit for the environment. In 2020, KCD reviewed 17 closed grants and found that while grantees could show project completion, and provide anecdotal reporting of long term benefits, additional support for grant recipients is needed to evaluate long term outcomes.

**\$1,088,695** Awarded

**20** Projects

**11** Jurisdictions



**Auburn - \$19,965**

White River Valley Museum - 2020 Farm Program and Project Support of Mary Olson Farm

**Auburn - \$20,000**

Auburn International Farmers Market - Marketing and Demonstrations

**Beaux Arts Village - \$2,210**

Academy Path and Adjacent Woods Restoration

**Bellevue - \$30,000**

Lake Hills Greenbelt Knotweed Restoration

**Bellevue - \$10,000**

Translated Materials for Natural Resource Conflict Outreach

**Bellevue - \$35,000**

Scoping of Animal Relief Areas

**Bellevue - \$24,000**

Natural Resources Animated Short Videos

**Des Moines - \$11,750**

Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market - Low Income Senior Healthy Eating Initiative

**Issaquah - \$50,000**

Lower Issaquah Creek Stream and Riparian Habitat Enhancement Project

**Kenmore - \$198,000**

Squire's Landing Park Waterfront and Natural Open Spaces Access Project

**Kirkland - \$30,000**

Yard Smart Rain Rewards

**Sammamish - \$29,870**

Triangle Associates - Stormwater Outreach

**Seattle - \$71,747**

Black Star Farmers - Walker Street Aquaponics Gardening Lab Project

**Seattle - \$71,645**

African Community Housing & Development - Farmers Market for the Delridge African Diaspora immigrant & Refugee Community

**Seattle - \$71,747**

Hip hop is Green - Cherry Street Farm, Lab & Culinary Anthropology Project

**Seattle - \$67,367**

iUrban Teen - Resilience, Innovation and Sustainability in a Changing World Project

**Seattle - \$71,747**

Na'ah Illahee Fund - Daybreak Star Restoration for Sovereign Futures Project

**Seattle - \$71,747**

Villa Comunitaria - Salsa De La Vida Project

**Tukwila - \$30,000**

Green Tukwila Implementation 2020-2021

**King County - \$172,500**

2020 Keeping Farmers Farming, King County Agriculture Program





## RIPARIAN LAND STEWARDSHIP

KCD works with member jurisdictions and other local and regional partners to increase the amount of freshwater and marine shoreline enhanced on private lands. One way we do this is by educating and empowering residents through workshops, one-on-one education, and technical assistance to steward their natural resources. KCD's education prioritizes residents across King County whose properties include or abut water bodies that are important to the health of Puget Sound and salmon. Workshops are structured to empower farmers, marine shoreline, streamside and lakeside residents in both urban and rural areas to take actions that create cooler, cleaner streams, and thriving shorelines. These individual actions lead to collective impacts that benefit all of us through healthier environments and more abundant fish populations.

In 2020, KCD moved our freshwater and marine shoreline workshops online to continue offering these educational opportunities during COVID-19. While KCD was new at administering online courses, we were thrilled with the turnout.

### Program Accomplishments for 2020

**58** People Provided Technical Assistance

**60** Marine Shoreline Residents Educated

**48** Stream and Lakeside Residents Educated

## ONLINE LEARNING

To ensure KCD cooperators and interested residents had access to KCD workshops during COVID-19, KCD moved our workshop series online to adapt to changing circumstances - and even recorded our most popular workshops so that people can improve their understanding of conservation issues related to their properties and become better stewards at their own pace and on their own schedules.

# RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP

KCD's Rural Land Stewardship Program provides natural resource technical assessments, recommendations, and farm conservation services to farmers, livestock owners, and other rural residents. Resource planners look at changes that can be made to improve farm productivity and reduce impacts on natural resources through implementing best management practices. Farm Conservation Resource Planners also offer technical assistance on questions such as what grasses to plant, how to build a fence, and when to mow. In addition to farm conservation planning, the program offers free soil testing, equipment rentals, dairy nutrient planning, and farm tours.

King County has roughly 42,000 acres of farmland and 3,200 producers. Of those farms, 94% are under 50 acres. Farmers in King County face a variety of economic, resource, and regulatory hurdles. Through education, technical assistance, and cost-share, KCD helps rural land stewards improve water quality, reduce negative environmental impacts, and achieve their land use goals. Collectively, this has a major impact on our local food economy and soil health and water quality.

## Program Accomplishments for 2020

**49** People Educated on Agricultural Topics

**198** People Provided Technical Assistance

**44** Farm Conservation Plans Written

**\$178,000** Cost-share Awarded

**34** Farm Equipment Loans

## Program Outcomes for 2020

Program outcomes look at the long-term impacts our work has creating behavior changes in our cooperators and leaving a lasting benefit for the environment.

- Of cooperators surveyed, 23 out of 24 implemented at least one best management practice from their farm conservation plan.
- Landowners implemented an average of 2.7 out of 7 practices prescribed by KCD planners.
- Of those surveyed, 22 out of 24 people reported improvements to their property indicating improved overall aesthetics and better water quality.

## FARM HELP HOTLINE

**When COVID-19 hit in early March, all aspects of the food system changed overnight, from on-farm health and safety protocols to supply chains and markets. KCD heard from a number of farmers looking for assistance navigating the sudden and expansive set of resources available to adapt and survive these challenges. In response, we coordinated the new KCD Farm Help Line and Navigation Service.**

**The Help Line connected King County farmers with KCD farm resource planners and staff to help navigate the resources available in the new world of COVID-19. Funding and financial resources, on-farm assistance, labor help, safety protocols, marketing opportunities, legal support, business management, stress management, and shared resources were all provided. KCD was able to help dozens of farmers connect with financial and other resources to weather 2020.**



# RIPARIAN RESTORATION/IMPROVEMENT

Streams, rivers, wetlands, lakes and ponds are a critical feature of King County's landscape. Aquatic areas and their vegetative buffers provide cool water for fish and wildlife habitat for birds and other animals. Throughout King County, these areas are impacted by land development, agricultural practices, and the presence of invasive species.

KCD's Riparian Restoration Program offers aquatic area enhancement services to help protect and improve the health of streams, rivers, wetlands, lakes, ponds, and marine shorelines. KCD services include a free buffer project design, a generous cost-share rate to pay for labor and materials associated with removing invasive species, and native species planting. KCD also provides three years of free maintenance and monitoring to ensure a high rate of plant survival.

## Program Accomplishments for 2020

**22 Projects Implemented**

**10 Projects Planned**

**2+ Miles of Shoreline Improved**

**12+ Acres of Shoreline Improved**

**20,000 Native Plants Planted**

**\$102,376 Cost-share Awarded**

**\$86,544 Additional Funds Awarded**

## Program Outcomes for 2020

Program outcomes look at the long-term impacts our work has creating behavior changes in our cooperators and leaving a lasting benefit for the environment.

- For 5th year projects, 89% met Native Cover Benchmark, 83% met Invasive Cover Benchmark, and 89% met Density Benchmark
- Met all benchmark indicators 67% of 5th year projects compared to 24% for 3rd year projects
- Natural resource improvements were noticed by 94% of survey respondents resulting from their projects, including coyote, bear, bee, salamander, elk, and river otter sightings





## **RURAL FARMLAND AND URBAN BACKYARDS CONNECTED BY MAY CREEK**

**In 2020, KCD completed two projects along May Creek to restore private streamsidelines on rural farmland and an urban backyard. In rural May Valley, crews removed invasive species along a stretch of May Creek and replaced them with over 2,000 native plants.**

**Meanwhile, KCD's urban restoration crew got to work in the lower May Creek watershed converting a suburban lawn into a streamside buffer vegetated with a diverse array of native plants to help sustain native wildlife and pollinators. May Creek is crucial spawning and rearing ground for Chinook salmon. As they grow, these streamside habitats will stabilize banks, reduce pollutants, cool waters, and improve habitat.**

**There are many benefits of streamside habitat stewardship. Unvegetated farmland and suburban lawns lack structure for stormwater infiltration, causing excess nutrients from upstream farms and pollutants from urban areas downstream to drain directly into May Creek. This runoff is problematic because May Creek provides crucial spawning and rearing ground for the king of the Sound, the mighty Chinook salmon – which happens to be the meal of choice of our resident orcas. Luckily, trees and shrubs native to the Pacific Northwest have evolved to capture stormwater by slowing down water flow through the canopy and drinking it up in the ground before it can carry runoff into the stream. Better water quality means more abundant Chinook salmon runs, and in turn, well-fed orcas.**





## **EXPANDING WILDFIRE OUTREACH**

The challenges of COVID-19 led to a shift in how the Wildfire Preparedness Program reached out to and educated King County residents on protecting their homes and properties from wildfire. From an increased social media presence to webinars and recorded presentations, the program was able to respond to new conditions.

This allowed us to participate in several state-wide virtual events, accommodating many more people than in-person programming. A highlight was a joint presentation with the WA Department of Natural Resources and Kittitas CD to explain the differences between Western and Eastern Washington wildfire preparedness actions. It was an enjoyable chance to coordinate with another conservation district, while meeting the needs of King County residents who have homes or loved ones on both sides of the Cascades.

## **WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS**

As climate change and population growth pressures mount, Pacific Northwest forests are threatened. KCD is able to support individual jurisdictions and agencies by mobilizing private landowners to protect our forests. Meeting the demand to train and support owners of small forest properties to safeguard our regional forest resources is critical.

Collectively, small properties comprise over 40,000 forested acres in King County. KCD provides wildfire safety evaluations and fire-adapted planning services to small residential forest landowners and neighborhoods or HOA communities. After the risk planning evaluation, cooperators can engage with KCD to develop a Community Wildfire Action Plan to implement wildfire risk reduction projects focused on reducing ground- and ladder-fuels in home ignition zones and around other infrastructure assets.

### **Program Accomplishments for 2020**

**4 Wildfire Workshops**

**57 Individual Risk Evaluations**

**233 Acres covered by Wildfire  
Risk Evaluations**

**7 Communities Partnered With  
to Reduce Wildfire Risks**



# URBAN FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Urban forests' contribution to health, economic and social well-being is now well-documented. Healthy urban forests also provide resilience and mitigate the impacts of severe weather in the face of climate change. A regional approach to expanding tree canopy across King County's urban landscapes is critical, especially in south King County where a dramatic lack of canopy coincides with the county's highest levels of pollution and illness. KCD's Urban Forest Health Program partners with member jurisdictions to fund and provide technical support to projects in backyards, public easements, parks and open spaces in incorporated King County.

The Request for Proposal process for new urban forest projects was not held in 2020, but will be held again in 2021. Work was continued or concluded on six projects in SeaTac, Lake Forest Park, Normandy Park, Seattle, and Snoqualmie.

## Program Accomplishments for 2020

**4.75 Acres of Urban Forest Had Invasive Species Removed**

**6 Projects Continued**

**5 Cities Partnered With**



## RESTORING SEATAC PARK

In 2019, KCD funded and implemented a project with the City of SeaTac that identified North SeaTac Park as a priority site for forest stewardship and restoration. North SeaTac Park holds roughly half of the forested public land in the city of SeaTac. This community forest stewardship project brings together KCD, Forterra (on behalf of the Port of Seattle), City of SeaTac Parks, Partner in Employment (PIE), and community volunteers to restore and maintain the park's forested areas. Beginning in 2020, City Parks staff, KCD-sponsored Washington Conservation Corps crews, Partner in Employment youth crews, and local volunteers have removed invasive plant species from nearly 5 acres of forest within the park. The project also provided environmental career advising and mentorship opportunities between newly-arrived refugee and immigrant youth working on PIE crews and KCD staff.

In 2021, the project calls for planting native vegetation in the park to restore native forest habitat and developing a 20-year forest stewardship plan to guide long-term forest stewardship and restoration within North SeaTac Park.

# SMALL LOT FOREST STEWARDSHIP

KCD's Small Lot Forest Stewardship program partners with small acreage private forest landowners to improve forest health and increase canopy cover. Through education, technical assistance, and cost-share assistance, the program empowers landowners to become knowledgeable and successful stewards of their forests.

Over 42,000 acres of forested acres in King County are held by owners of woods smaller than five acres. Collectively, these acres represent a vast resource that, through forest stewardship programming, contributes to the overall health of our community and offers a timely opportunity to proactively engage private landowners in stewardship.



## Program Accomplishments for 2020

**850** People Educated Through  
WSU Extension Partnership

**116** People Provided Technical  
Assistance

**45** Forestry Assessments  
Completed

**8** Forest Health Management  
Plans Written

**49.93** Acres of Forest Treated

**2,524** Native Plants Planted

## Program Outcomes for 2020

Program outcomes look at the long-term impacts our work has creating behavior changes in our cooperators and leaving a lasting benefit for the environment.

- After engaging with the KCD forestry teams, 90% of survey respondents took an action, like controlling for invasive plants.
- After using KCD services, 48% of cooperators reported seeing near-term improvements to their forest, including hummingbird, coyote, and lynx sightings.
- Improvement of cooperator services from survey feedback.

## IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

In our continuous effort to improve KCD's services, the Forest Health Management Program (along with the Farm Services and Riparian Restoration teams) worked with our evaluation staff and a consultant to develop an ongoing survey tool for landowners and cooperators. Questions were written to gauge program participants' knowledge of forest practices, their ability to implement our recommendations, and their perception of the environmental benefits that forest practices offer.

Several of KCD cooperators helped test the survey and offered valuable feedback, not only about the survey itself, but also about KCD programming. A pre-service survey is now a part of the intake process and we offer a post-service survey a year later. This helps us measure program outcomes, listen to the landowners we work with, and improve our programming as necessary.



## REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM

KCD's Regional Food System (RFS) works to strengthen our local food economy by bridging the gap between producers and consumers and serving as a catalyst in making local food production both environmentally and economically sustainable.

RFS grants are based on goals and strategies of the King County Local Food Initiative and input from regional food system participants. The program funds projects with demonstrated public benefit that contribute to the economic viability of local farmers, encourage new farmers, expand acreage in food production, improve food access, or increase demand for, and sales of, King County farm products.

Strategic initiative grants provide longer-term, sustained investments in key food system concerns. Current areas for strategic investment include working farmland access, farm business support and technical assistance coordination, institutional purchasing, and infrastructure support.

In 2020, KCD awarded \$256,7841 in competitive grants to innovative and diverse projects across King County. It also released an additional \$100,000 to help connect local producers with food banks to respond to the spike in need due to COVID-19.

### Competitive Grants for 2020

#### **Black Star Farmers - \$20,000**

Putting the Garden Under the Microscope

#### **Feed the People - \$19,600**

Building the BIPOC Producer Pipeline for Food Programs in Seattle's Communities of Color

#### **Forterra - \$18,100**

Making Farmland More Affordable through Ecosystem Service Markets

#### **Highline College - \$20,000**

Immigrant and Refugee Agriculture Education Tuition Assistance

#### **King County DNR - \$20,000**

Infrastructure Improvements on Sammamish River Farm

#### **Living Well Kent - \$20,000**

Immigrant Farmer Business Development in Kent

#### **Pacific Coast Harvest - \$20,000**

Pacific Coast Harvest/Farmstand Local Foods Refrigerated Box Truck

#### **Seattle Good Business Network - \$20,000**

Good Food Kitchens Local Procurement Expansion Pilot

#### **Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District - \$20,000**

Creating New irrigation Water Supply Using Foster Pond

#### **tBUG (the Bellevue Urban Garden) - \$20,000**

tBUG Food Forward

#### **Vashon Island Growers Association - \$19,087**

Vashon-Maury Island Food Preservation Initiative

#### **Viva Farms - \$20,000**

Breaking Ground: Removing Barriers in Food Production through Tractor Training and Increased Farm Efficiency

#### **Washington Water Trust - \$19,997**

Expanding a Consumer Market that Incentivizes Dry Farming as a Sustainable and Resilient Practice for Producers

### Strategic Initiatives for 2020

#### **Working Farmland Access - \$150,000**

Partnership with Washington Farmland Trust and the Working Farmland Partnership Facilitating Matches to Bring More Land Into Production and Increase The Number of Farmers in King County



# AGRICULTURAL DRAINAGE ASSISTANCE

Over the past few decades, much of the county's best farmland has become impacted by poor field drainage, and the threat has been compounded by rapid urbanization, which promotes increased storm-water runoff.

KCD provides comprehensive services to assist farmers with maintaining and improving agricultural drainage systems. Our aim is to enable more farmers to participate in the King County Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program (ADAP) through a combination of technical assistance and matching grants. In addition, we conducted a county-wide assessment of drainage needs as the basis for future planning.

Improved field drainage will increase productivity by extending the growing season, enabling the planting of higher value crops, and expanding grazing for livestock. Improved drainage will also provide an opportunity for increased agricultural employment, enhance local food production, and contribute to the continued growth, vitality and resilience of local agriculture.

## Program Outcomes for 2020

Program outcomes look at the long-term impacts our work has creating behavior changes in our cooperators and leaving a lasting benefit for our community. KCD has completed 16 drainage projects since 2014. A 2020 review of 4 completed projects found

- KCD's ditch maintenance program helped significantly expedite ditch dredging projects with some cooperators crediting KCD for getting them done at all
- Neighbors have a strong effect on project success
- Cooperators with neighbors that also do ditch maintenance see greater improvement in drainage on their property
- Clogged ditches on neighboring properties caused a reduction in benefits for cooperators

## Program Accomplishments for 2020

**3 Projects Completed**

**6 Farms Supported**

**1.88 Miles of Ditch Cleared**

**80 Acres of Farmland Improved**

**15 Acres of Farmland Restored**



## DUCKS UNLIMITED COLLABORATION INCREASES RENEWED AG LAND

In 2020, KCD completed a project on Cherry Valley Dairy and a neighboring Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) property in Duvall.

Collaboration with non-profit Ducks Unlimited allowed KCD to leverage grant funding. Ducks Unlimited spent \$65,000 of their own federal grant funding to complete a neighboring property owned by WDFW for a more impactful drainage project totaling 55 acres improved and 15 acres renewed for agricultural production.

# COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE

An equitable and resilient local food economy includes urban food production. 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. Existing urban agricultural organizations frequently lack access to land, funds, and technical support to meet the demand for sustainable urban small-lot food production for low-income and immigrant populations, who benefit most from expanded urban agricultural opportunities. A healthy local food system requires developing opportunities to grow fresh food in dense urban neighborhoods, especially in communities that are transit-dependent, low-income, or comprised of primarily immigrant populations.

KCD's Community Agriculture program provides community gardens with resources to get started, or expand, through technical assistance, education, materials, and small grants.

## Program Accomplishments for 2020

**900 Soil Nutrient Tests for  
Farmers and Gardeners**

**7 Existing Community Gardens  
Provided Technical Assistance**

**3 Community Gardens Engaged**

**2,000+ Culturally Relevant Seed  
Starts Given to Immigrant  
Farmers**

**250 Pounds of Cover Crop Seed  
Provided to 20 Community Gardens**

**111 Cubic Yards of GroCo™ Compost  
Distributed**



## CULTURALLY RELEVANT SEED STARTS

The COVID-19 pandemic was full of uncertainty and change for community gardens. KCD's Community Agriculture Team continued the Culturally Relevant Seed Start program to support community gardens with unique varieties of crops not easily found in stores. These starts increase knowledge and provide immigrant/refugee gardeners opportunities to reconnect with their food traditions and culture.

Seed starts grown in 2020 were Clemson Spineless okra, Ping-Tung & Thai Round eggplant, Malabar spinach, Roselle, and Armenian cucumber, all of which were top requests from surveying community gardeners. The Community Agriculture Team was able to grow over 2,000 culturally relevant seed starts, personally deliver, and organize pick-ups at KCD's Renton office. This effort reduces barriers for many immigrant/refugee gardeners who do not have the infrastructure to grow these crop starts on their own.



## **LANDOWNER INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

KCD's Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) promotes stewardship of natural resources on private property by providing cost-share funding to help landowners implement natural resource best management practices (BMPs).

The Landowner Incentive Program's goal is to promote the implementation of natural resource management practices detailed in KCD prepared technical assistance and management plans such as Farm Conservation Plans and Forest Health Management Plans.

KCD Reimburses from 50%-90% of approved projects depending on the natural resource BMP.

### **Program Highlights**

In 2020, the Landowner Incentive Program awarded 43 new contracts for \$238,056, with an additional \$86,544 in project funding coming from KCD's Shorelines Program.

**24 New Agricultural Contracts**  
for **\$117,432** Cost-share

**17 New Shoreline Contracts**  
for **\$104,376** Cost-share

**2 New Forestry Contracts**  
for **\$16,704** Cost-share

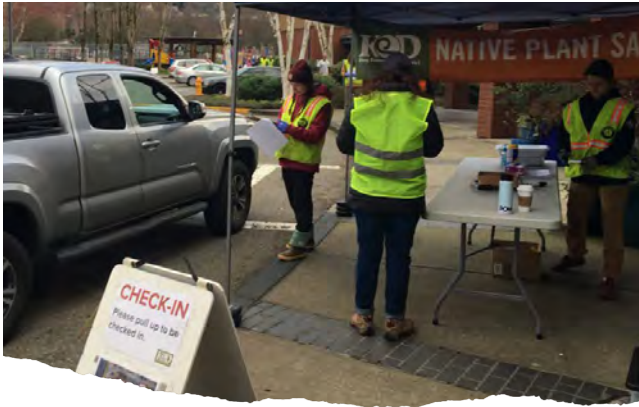


### **INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL FARM TOUR HIGHLIGHTS MANURE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH AND OTHER BMPs**

American Farmland Trust (AFT), KCD and Discovery Farms® Washington are leading a Discovery Farms® project in the South Puget Sound to explore, evaluate, and promote the benefits of on-farm conservation practices that enhance water quality. The project evaluates how different treatments of the manure storage best management practice, along with a control, impact water quality. The treatments are installed on two farms in Enumclaw and on-the-ground water quality data is monitored regularly.

In 2020, KCD hosted a virtual tour of this research and other best management practices available to farmers in King County.





## NATIVE PLANT SALE

King County residents love native plants because they're hardy, beautiful, and easy to maintain. KCD's Native Bareroot Plant Sale provides landowners, organizations, schools and government agencies with low-cost bareroot native plant material to improve habitat and landscape naturally. In addition, plant sale customers receive assistance on species selection, information on installing and maintaining plants and recommendations related to habitat enhancement.

### Program Highlights

The 2020 Bareroot Native Plant Sale provided over 65,000 native trees and shrubs to King County residents to improve habitat. KCD was able to hold the 2020 sale despite COVID-19 by adapting our distribution method to a socially-distanced drive-through model. Customers received their plants safely, and often in record time.

## KCD NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

KCD's Native Plant Nursery grows native trees, shrubs, herbs and wetland plants for habitat enhancement projects. Partners volunteer at the nursery in trade for technical services and plant material. In particular, community groups benefit by volunteering to gain assistance on planning and implementing habitat enhancement projects. In 2020, 25 volunteers received 608 native plants for their assistance.

## HABITAT RESTORATION STARTS AT HOME

When it comes to the tall order of protecting and restoring our planet's endangered habitats, starting local is a sound rule of thumb. King County resident Mary Johnson took this notion seriously, discovering that in order to make a profound impact, she need not look further than her own Sammamish backyard.

Over the past eight years, she's partnered with KCD to transform her "mow, blow, and go" half acre of grass into a picturesque native plant paradise. Beyond the beautiful results of her efforts, Johnson's restoration labor has paid off in the return of a breathtaking abundance of biodiversity, with reptiles, beetles, mammals, and birds flocking to her backyard oasis.



# BUDGET

## 2020 Revenue by Source Budget to Actual

Actual Budget

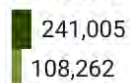
### Rates & Charges Receipts



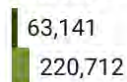
### Grants & Contract Revenue



### Plant Sale\*



### Interest Earnings



### Other



Alternative budget tables can be found in Appendix A on page 25.

\*Includes onetime adjustment to true up plant sale recording to cash basis accounting method. Total 2020 Plant Sale Revenue (Nov 19-Mar 20) \$127,011.

\*\* Variance due to prior year restricted funds expended in 2020, as well as some items that are sub expenses of other categories. System improvements are being made to increase detailed tracking going forward.

## 2020 Spending by Program Budget to Actual

Actual Budget

### Clean Water



### Operations & Board



### Member Jurisdiction\*\*



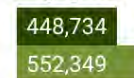
### Agriculture & Local Foods



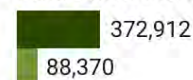
### Forest Stewardship



### Engagement



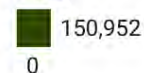
### Land Owner Incentive Program\*\*



### Engineering



### Other



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

King Conservation District is led by an all-volunteer, five-member board of supervisors. Three of the members are elected while the other two are appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission, an agency created to assist and guide conservation district activities in Washington State.

By statute, KCD elections occur annually during the first quarter of each year. Elections are conducted pursuant to guidelines established by RCW 89.08 with oversight from the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Board members contribute local perspectives on important natural resource management and conservation issues, seek feedback about conservation programs from residents, set policy, and direct KCD's work plan and budget.

## 2020-2021 KCD Board

Burr Mosby, Chair

Kirstin Haugen, Vice-Chair

Bill Knutsen, Secretary/Auditor

Jim Haack, Supervisor

Chris Porter, Supervisor

# ADVISORY COMMITTEE

KCD's Advisory Committee is composed of elected officials and senior staff from cities, the County, and organizations across King County, as well as their alternates. King County, the Sound Cities Association and KCD each have responsibility to fill certain seats with appropriate and effective representatives.

The Advisory Committee extends KCD's reach into its broad community of stakeholders by bringing diverse and expanded perspectives back to KCD's Board of Supervisors. The Advisory Committee deliberates on policy issues and forwards its recommendations to the Board.

## Members

Burr Mosby, KCD Chair

Dow Constantine, King County Executive

Claudia Balducci, King County Council Chair

Tahmina Martelly, World Relieve Seattle

John Stokes, City of Bellevue Councilmember

Brenda Fincher, City of Kent Councilmember

Mark Phillips, City of Lake Forest Park Councilmember

Amy McHenry, City of Duvall Councilmember

Jeff Boyce, King County Rural Forest Commission

Paul Pink, King County Agriculture Commission

Victoria Sanots, Y-WE

Howard Langeveld, Rural Resident

Rachel Perlot, Urban Resident

## Alternates

Kirstin Haugen, KCD Vice-Chair

Mike Lufkin, King County Executive

Jake Tracy, King County Council

Victoria Hunt, City of Issaquah Councilmember

Susan Boundy-Sanders, City of Woodinville  
Councilmember

Kelli Curtis, City of Kirkland Councilmember

Mari Knutsen, King County Rural Forest Commission

Lily Gottlieb-McHale, King County Agriculture  
Commission

Sanoli Jasuja, Y-WE





# OPERATIONS

KCD's Operations Program focuses on managing the processes to produce and distribute products and services to internal and external partners, including managing purchases, inventory control, quality control, storage, logistics and evaluation of processes. The flow of information among human resources, accounting, inventory control, and other assets, planning and decision making is made easier by facilitation of efficiency and effectiveness of processes. Operations management includes measurement and analysis of internal processes and making recommendations and working collaboratively with the Board of Supervisors and staff on projects.

## General Overhead

KCD's Annual Budget includes expenses for general overhead. Although these do not constitute expenses with specific program deliverables, they provide the operational infrastructure and support for KCD staff to implement on-the-ground work. These expenses are currently referred to as Tier 1 overhead items. The largest expenses in this category are rent, utilities, office equipment, information technology, and vehicles.

## Finance

KCD's Finance team consists of a cross-functional working group that provides all accounting related functions for the organization. These functions include, but are not limited to, annual reporting, audit, budgeting, financial reporting to Board of Supervisors and Executive Director, and external partners accounts payable and receivable, grant funding, contracting and payroll.

## Human Resources

Human Resources recommends strategies for employee recruitment, development, growth and retention. Priorities are as follows: compensation, planning, performance, professional development, recruitment, strategic planning and work culture enhancement.

HR works closely with KCD's Board and Executive Director to update the salary schedule and performance-based compensation system, update personnel policy and employee benefit programs, review employee career development and training programs, and maintain KCD's employee records.

## Legal and Related

KCD's Executive Director and Director of Operations and Human Resources oversee the day-to-day contracting and regulatory interpretation as well as respond to and monitor all legal actions that impact the organization. KCD maintains outside legal counsel to handle issues that arise with KCD's unique and collaborative grant program and contracting responsibilities.

# APPENDIX A: BUDGET TABLE

This page presents the 2020 KCD revenue and spending information found on page 22 as a table broken out into KCD Priority Areas (Clean Water, Forest Stewardship, and Agriculture & Local Foods) and select overhead and special program areas. KCD is undertaking systems improvement around budgeting and financial reporting. We expect this work to change and improve how we share our financials in future years to give a more thorough picture of how we fund the conservation work that we do.

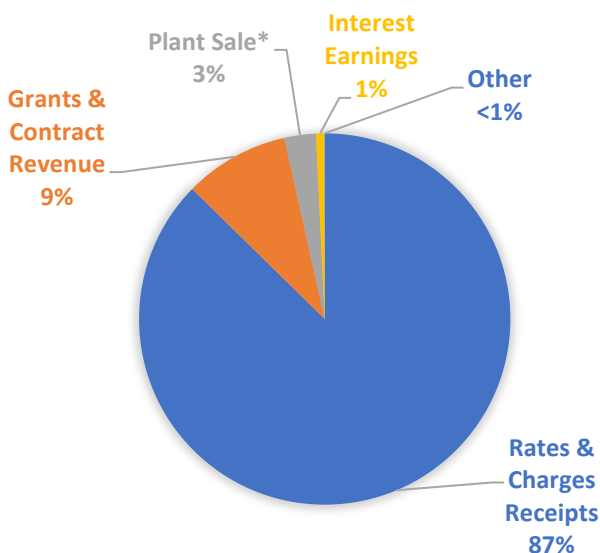
	2020 Actual	2020 Budget	Budget to Actual
<b>Revenue by Source</b>			
Rates & Charges Receipts	\$ 7,675,928	\$ 7,662,651	\$ (13,277)
Grants & Contract Revenue	804,795	1,581,177	776,382
Plant Sale*	241,005	108,262	(132,743)
Interest Earnings	63,141	220,712	157,571
Other	<u>2,725</u>	<u>750</u>	<u>(1,975)</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 8,787,594</b>	<b>\$ 9,573,552</b>	<b>\$ 785,958</b>

\*Includes onetime adjustment to true up plant sale recording to cash basis accounting method. Total 2020 Plant Sale Revenue (Nov 19-Mar 20) \$127,011.

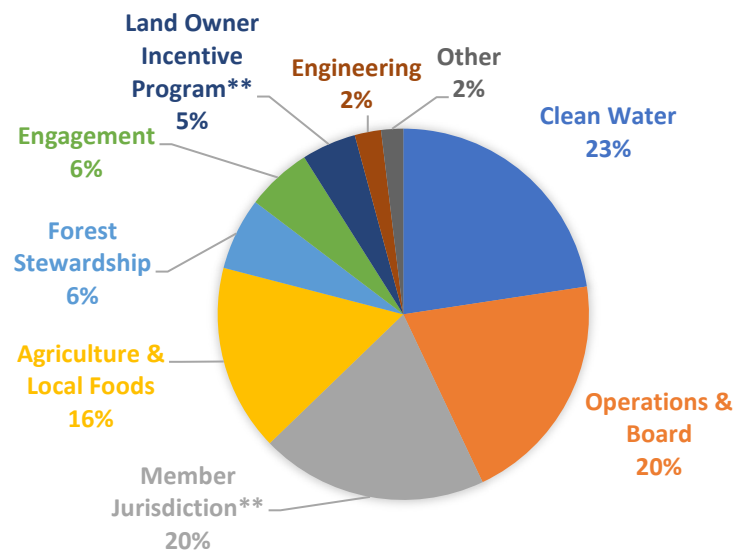
<b>Spending by Program</b>			
Clean Water	\$ 1,776,013	\$ 2,675,445	\$ 899,432
Operations & Board	1,600,582	1,919,269	318,687
Member Jurisdiction**	1,555,840	1,176,077	(379,763)
Agriculture & Local Foods	1,276,943	1,848,056	571,113
Forest Stewardship	494,663	1,150,342	655,679
Engagement	448,734	552,349	103,616
Land Owner Incentive Program**	372,912	88,370	(284,542)
Engineering	180,341	163,643	(16,698)
Other	<u>150,952</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(150,952)</u>
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>\$ 7,856,980</b>	<b>\$ 9,573,551</b>	<b>\$ 1,716,572</b>

\*\* Variance due to prior year restricted funds expended in 2020, as well as some items that are sub expenses of other categories. System improvements are being made to increase detail tracking going forward.

**2020 Revenue by Source (actual)**



**2020 Spending by Program (actual)**



# APPENDIX B: ILA BENCHMARKS

Priority	Program	2020 Benchmarks	2020 Actual	Difference
Local Food	Regional Food <sup>1</sup>	\$900,000 Awarded 20% Existing Awards Evaluated	\$858,406 20%	(\$41,594) <sup>1</sup> Met
	Agricultural Drainage <sup>2 &amp; 3</sup>	2.5 Miles Drainage Ditches Cleared 300 Acres Restored/Improved 25% of Projects Evaluated	1.88 95 25%	(0.62) <sup>2</sup> (205) <sup>3</sup> Met
	Community Agriculture	3 New Community Gardens Assisted 5-7 Existing Gardens Provided Support	3 7	Met Met
	Riparian Land Stewardship <sup>4 &amp; 5</sup>	192 Landowners Engaged 19 Engaged Landowners Take Action	166 6	(26) <sup>4</sup> (13) <sup>5</sup>
Clean Water	Rural Land Stewardship <sup>6 &amp; 7</sup>	144 Landowners Engaged 38 New Farm Plans 38 Farm Plans Reviewed & Evaluated \$243,750 LIP Cost Share Awarded	247 44 23 \$178,000	152 6 (15) <sup>6</sup> (\$65,750) <sup>7</sup>
	Riparian Restoration/Improvement	18 Projects 10 Acres Impacted or 1.5 Miles Impacted 20 Projects Evaluated \$112,500 LIP Cost Share Awarded	22 12.15 2.02 39 \$190,920	4 2.15 0.52 19 \$78,420
	Wildfire Preparedness	3-4 Communities Receive Assistance	7	3
Healthy Forests	Urban Forest Stewardship <sup>8 &amp; 9</sup>	3 Cities Receive Funding Support \$150,000 Awarded	0 0	Not Met <sup>8</sup> (\$150,000) <sup>9</sup>
	Small Lot Forest Stewardship	100 Landowners Engaged 80-100 Landowners Receive Assistance 10 Existing Project Plans Evaluated	966 116 10	866 16 Met
	Member Jurisdiction Grants	35 Jurisdictions Engaged 25% Develop Grant Proposals 25% Existing/Historic Projects Evaluated	35 57% 25%	Met Met Met
	Board Elections	Paper Ballots Received at Drop Boxes Electronic Balloting System Interactive Online Voter Guide Promotion on King County Elections Website	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Met Met Met Met

1) Not all competitive grant money was awarded due to a lack of qualified proposals based on committee review. Several strategic initiatives that were set to be awarded funding were not ready to launch. KCD will increase outreach efforts to increase the number of qualifying proposals. KCD will work with partners to prepare strategic initiatives to be ready for funding.

2 & 3) COVID 19 and vacancy of the agricultural drainage coordinator position for a portion of 2020 hindered this benchmark. KCD will fill the agricultural drainage coordinator position for the 2021 season.

4 & 5) Staffing and COVID 19 stopped in-person events and took time to transition to online education. KCD will increase capacity and skill with online learning opportunities and tracking landowner engagement.

6) Cooperators not responding to evaluation survey and a small sample size limited ability to evaluate. KCD will allow more time for cooperator responses and reach out to larger group of cooperators to increase survey responses.

7) COVID 19 and the stay-at-home order, staffing, and internal processes contributed to missing this benchmark. KCD will be significantly less hampered by COVID 19 and will review internal processes related to this benchmark.

8 & 9) KCD did not hold a Request for Proposals for new Urban Forestry projects in 2020 due to staffing issues and COVID 19. KCD resolved staffing for the Urban Forestry Program and will hold a 2021 Request for Proposals for new Urban Forestry projects to allocate both 2020 and 2021 funding.



## Get Involved

**IT STARTS WITH YOU,  
KCD CAN HELP**

[kingcd.org](http://kingcd.org)

P 425-282-1900

[district@kingcd.org](mailto:district@kingcd.org)

800 SW 39th Street, Suite 150  
Renton, WA 98057



**CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**  
OF WASHINGTON STATE  
*your window to healthy lands*



**Local Food, Healthy Forests, Clean Water, Better Ground**