



STRATEGIC PLAN: YEARS 2022 - 2026

Mission

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

Vision

King Conservation District will continue to be a leader in community-based stewardship of natural resources and provide services to support economically viable working lands throughout the District.

Values

▶ Accountable ▶ Respectful ▶ Collaborative ▶ Empowering ▶ Trusted

Function

- KCD facilitates community conservation through voluntary sustainable stewardship within and between the public and private sectors in the District and the region. The District has no regulatory or enforcement authority.
- KCD supports working lands (e.g. farms, marine, industrial, forests, shellfish beds, etc.) as they effectively protect open space, optimally steward resources, and are self-sustainable. KCD educates or coaches land managers (residential and commercial), schools, scientists, consultants, and agencies on how to recognize and steward natural resources. KCD provides technical assistance and funding that support solutions.
- In addition to funding its core programs, KCD offers grant funding to support stewardship congruent with its mission.
- KCD works hand-in-hand with the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS develops and maintains current best management practices and standards, which KCD employs in the implementation of its projects.

King Conservation District Priorities

Rural Forestry, Urban Forestry, and Wildfire Resilience

Rural Forestry - KCD will work with small-lot forest landowners across unincorporated King County to increase the resilience of the forested landscape and capture the ecological, recreational, and other values of forests by helping landowners actively manage forestlands and open space areas.

Urban Forestry - KCD will expand the urban forest through preservation, planting, restoration, and education. In partnership with our member jurisdictions and their respective neighborhood and community organizations, groups, and landowners, KCD will provide project management, implementation, and technical assistance services depending on their various levels of need, and program development. It will convene a working group to evaluate and identify projects to support.

Wildfire Resilience - KCD has expanded its rural forest health management services to provide a range of wildfire resiliency services to help homeowners and communities prepare for wildfire. These services include wildfire safety evaluations, community action plans, and forest fuels reduction projects supported with cost-share. The program will continue to coordinate closely with local, county, and state partners.

Food and Farming

Sustainable, Equitable, and Resilient Regional Food System - KCD will address these challenges by working with our partners and technical experts to implement a regional grant program designed to build capacity in farmland access, food production, transportation, storage, distribution, local food access, and local food purchasing. Grants awarded will reflect RFS program criteria, as well as funding priorities that include consumer demand, farmland access, food safety, infrastructure, and farm business management.

Urban Agriculture - KCD will build on existing success, such as Tilth Alliance's Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands in south Seattle, and Highline College's Urban Agriculture Program as models of success, and work together to innovate new pilot programs to learn from and adapt. *Rural Agriculture* - KCD will increase its support of rural farmers through both increasing the number of plans to self-selected cooperators as well as expand current pilot efforts on sub-basin targeting to improve water, soil, and habitat quality in watersheds that exhibit poor benchmarks.

Raise literacy of policymakers and stakeholders on the value of and critical need to protect and expand working farmland. Invite elected officials and their staffers out to project sites to educate them on the importance of both rural and urban investments in agriculture while protecting natural resources and preserving farmland.

Shorelines and Riparian Habitat

KCD will continue enhancing freshwater and marine riparian habitat on private property and engaging landowners and residents through education, technical services, and financial incentives. KCD will work with our member jurisdictions and other local and regional partners to build on current programming to increase acres and miles as well as connectivity of enhanced freshwater and marine shoreline.

Fostering Collaboration to Build Capacity within the Community of the Multiple Partners and Stakeholders of King Conservation District

Increase Community Engagement - To be an effective conservation partner, KCD will broaden its connection with the community.

Expand and support efforts of PSCD caucus to increase capacity of its members - Partnerships and collaboration offer greater impact.

Advisory Committee Outreach - Provide communication and build collaboration between KCD and stakeholders.

Increase Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Community-led conservation is most successful with cultural, geographic, and ethnic diversity that enhances KCD's impact.

Strengthen tribal relations and foster opportunities with additional tribes - The tribes present an important component and viewpoint for KCD.

Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) - KCD will increase our region's capacity to protect and enhance natural resources by providing financial incentives complementary to our technical programs and services that support private landowners in meeting the region's expectations that common natural resources be protected and enhanced for the public benefit.

Member Jurisdiction Grant Program - KCD will increase our region's capacity to protect and enhance natural resources by providing financial incentives in the form of grants to 35 Member Jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations. Grants awarded will meet KCD's strategic priorities as well as the program's criteria which includes four natural resource improvement action areas: direct improvement of natural resources, education and outreach, pilot and demonstration, and capacity building.

Goals	Statement of Intent	2-Year Objectives	6-Year Objectives
<p>PRIORITY 1:</p> <p>FORESTRY</p> <p>Rural Forestry: KCD will work with small-lot forest landowners across unincorporated King County to increase the resilience of the forested landscape and capture the ecological, recreational, and other values of forests by helping landowners actively manage forestlands and open space areas.</p>	<p>KCD will expand its efforts by enhancing its partnerships with King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Washington State University Extension, and rural residential and small private forest landowners to protect and enhance woodlots and smaller stands of forest, reduce forest fragmentation, and capture the ecological and economic benefits of forests.</p>	<p>Continue current level of service, and implement targeted outreach as necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet annual benchmarks including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engaging 100 small lot forest landowners ○ Providing robust technical assistance and forest planning to 80-100 small forest landowners ○ Awarding available KCD LIP cost-share funding to small private forest landowners to implement best management practices ○ 10 existing forest project plans reviewed and evaluated for impact • Implement pre-and post-service survey and use data to determine gaps in programming and needed improvements. • Investigate creative funding and programmatic solutions to meet gaps in service. • Support expansion of WSU Extension programming to include unique programs such as thinning and maple syruping workshops. • Implement robust cross-program database to better track landowners and offered services.

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<p>Urban Forestry: KCD will expand the urban forest through preservation, planting, restoration, and education. KCD will provide project management, implementation, and technical assistance services to member jurisdictions.</p>	<p>KCD will work with our member jurisdictions and other partners to build a program that increases street trees and urban tree canopy coverage and builds green infrastructure in communities across King County. We will build on existing programs and utilize other available resources when available.</p>	<p>Continue current level of service and implement targeted outreach as necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote best management practices, climate smart planting and design, and offer related educational opportunities to King County member jurisdictions. Meet annual benchmarks including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with at least 3 member jurisdictions annually in a support and/or coordination role to plan and implement urban forest retention and restoration programs. Provide \$150,000 worth of support per year in the form of contracted services, supplies and trees for urban forest projects.
<p><i>Wildfire Resilience</i> - KCD has expanded its rural forest health management services to provide a range of wildfire resiliency services to help homeowners and communities prepare for wildfire. These services include wildfire safety evaluations, community action plans, and forest fuels reduction projects supported with cost-share. The program will continue to coordinate closely with local, county, and state partners.</p>	<p>With more people living in the wildland urban interface, this new program will assist homeowners taking responsibility for wildfire safety actions to protect their property</p>	<p>Continue current level of service while implementing cost-share program and targeted outreach as necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet annual benchmark: providing technical assistance to 3-4 at risk communities (HOAs or groups of neighbors). Implement cost-share program to award \$53,000 per year for fuel management and home hardiness projects. Implement pre-and post-service survey and use data to determine gaps in programming and needed in improvements. Implement robust cross-program database to better track landowners and offered services.

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<p>PRIORITY 2:</p> <p>FOOD AND FARMING</p> <p>Sustainable, Equitable, and Resilient Regional Food System: KCD proposes to help address these challenges by working with our partners and technical experts to develop a regional grant program designed to build capacity in farmland access, food production, transportation, storage, distribution, local food access, and local food purchasing.</p>	<p>KCD will seek to align with established regional food system recommendations from the King County Executive's Local Food Initiative, Working Farmland Partnership, Viva Farms, Business Impact Northwest's Food Business Resource Center, Healthcare Without Harm, WSDA, and other stakeholders as appropriate.</p> <p>Funds will be used to leverage other resources, such as USDA, EPA, and state and local sources, whenever possible to ensure significant on-the-ground impact over the next five years.</p>	<p>Develop and deploy new expanded approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve local food access. • Invest in local food system as an economic growth sector. • Improve access to working farmland. • Continue to address storage, processing, and other infrastructure obstacles. • Strengthen direct market connections at farmers markets, retail outlets, and institutions. • Expand CSAs. • KCD will bring over \$5,000,000 to the expansion and stabilization of a sustainable, equitable, and resilient regional food economy over the next 5 years. These funds can be used as match for USDA and other grant sources for even greater impact on the development of our food system economy. • Grants awarded will reflect RFS program criteria, as well as funding priorities that include consumer demand, farmland access, food safety, infrastructure, and farm business management. • Follow up annually with 25% of RFS closed grants, and evaluate for impact.

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Urban Agriculture: KCD will build on existing success, such as Tilth Alliance's Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands in south Seattle, and Highline College's Urban Agriculture Program as models of success and work together to innovate new pilot programs to learn from and adapt.	<p>KCD will work with our member jurisdictions, King County, City of Seattle OSE, Tilth Alliance, community gardens, and others across the food system spectrum to identify strategies to develop urban agricultural opportunities.</p>	<p>Develop and deploy new expanded approach.</p>	<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, and increase gardener involvement. Grow current 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. Create 3 new community gardens per year. Ensure 5-7 existing community gardens receive technical assistance annually from KCD staff.

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Rural Agriculture: KCD will increase its support of rural farmers through both increasing the number of plans to self-selected clients as well as expanding current pilot efforts on sub-basin targeting to improve water, soil, and habitat quality in watersheds that exhibit poor benchmarks.	KCD will target farm planning services county-wide to key natural resource concern areas. For example, using the PIC approach targeting water quality impaired sub-basins with significant commercial farming land use	Develop and deploy new expanded approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain county-wide farm natural resource planning support. This program currently addresses water quality, salmon habitat, and farm productivity goals. • 150 farming service customers; 70 new farm conservation plans; including 2 dairy nutrient management plans. • Follow up (or evaluate) 140 farm plans. • Loan manure spreader to 30 landowners. Loan hay probe to all farmers for feed nutrient management. Loan lime spreader to landowners for soil fertility management. • Develop a multi-year outreach strategy to increase participation in farm planning services county-wide. • Connect land managers and farmers with financial assistance to make identified improvements.
Explore county-wide agriculture strategic plan.	Production and preservation can be more effective when partners participate in the planning process.	Scope out the funding, partnership, and timing for a county-wide strategic plan.	Maintain and update list of partners and opportunities for collaboration in planning.

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Raise literacy of policymakers and stakeholders on the value of and critical need to protect and expand working farmland.	Invite elected officials and their staffers to project sites to educate them on the importance of both rural and urban investments in agriculture while protecting natural resources and preserving farmland.	Develop and deploy site visit plan.	Foster greater communication between partners.
Agricultural Drainage Program: KCD will focus its efforts on engaging contiguous landowners to participate in ditch repair and maintenance to bring agricultural fields (with poor drainage) back into production.	KCD will continue to partner with King County's Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program (ADAP) to implement ditch repair and maintenance to meet Local Food Initiative goals by bringing farmland back into production so residents have access to local fruits, vegetables, and proteins.	KCD will focus its efforts on landowner engagement in high priority areas, project management for KC, and providing consultation and subject matter expertise to assist in the development of buffer plans.	<p>Increase annual miles of ditch maintenance from .5 to 2.5 miles per year.</p> <p>Over 6 years, bring 300 acres back into production. Follow up annually with 25% of cooperators that received dredging and maintenance, and evaluate for impact.</p> <p>Replace 2 culverts per year with appropriate fish passages capable of conveying water in a changing climate.</p> <p>Connect land managers and farmers with financial assistance to make identified improvements.</p>

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<p>PRIORITY 3:</p> <p>SHORELINES AND RIPARIAN HABITAT</p> <p>KCD will continue our work enhancing freshwater and marine riparian habitat on private property, and engaging landowners and residents through education and technical services, and financial incentives.</p>	<p>KCD will work with our member jurisdictions and other local and regional partners to build on current programming that increases not only the acres and miles, but also connectivity of enhanced freshwater and marine shoreline on private lands through workshops, one-on-one education, and technical and financial assistance for implementing best management practices.</p>	<p>Continue meeting all benchmarks.</p>	<p>A minimum of 192 freshwater and marine aquatic area landowners engaged annually in learning about, planning, and implementing practices, engaging 960 aquatic area landowners over 5 years.</p> <p>18 freshwater aquatic area planting, and enhancement projects implemented by KCD, restoring a minimum of 10 acres and 1.5 miles per year on a combination of urban and rural private lands, a total of at least 50 acres and 7.5 miles planted and enhanced over 5 years</p> <p>\$112,500 KCD LIP cost-share funds awarded annually for contracts with freshwater and marine aquatic area landowners to implement freshwater and marine shoreline planting and enhancement practices for a total of \$562,500 of cost-share monies awarded over 5 years.</p>

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Landowner Incentive Program (LIP): The LIP program supports KCD's other programs.	KCD will increase our region's capacity to protect and enhance natural resources by providing financial incentive complementary to our technical programs and services that support private landowners in meeting the region's expectations that common resources, such as water quality and fish and wildlife habitat be protected and enhanced for the public benefit.	Develop and deploy approach.	KCD will award \$506,000 in cost-share funding annually for a total of \$2,530,000 in cost-share funding to support best management practices on private property.
PRIORITY 4: FOSTERING COLLABORATION TO BUILD CAPACITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF MULTIPLE PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS OF KCD.	To be an effective conservation partner, KCD will broaden its connection with diverse communities throughout the County.	Create and execute a diverse engagement plan.	Continue to add communities, particularly traditionally underserved communities, and identify means of engagement. Continue and refine engagement plan.

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Expand and support the efforts of PSCD caucus to increase the capacity of its members and its profile in the region.	Partnerships and collaboration create greater impact.	<p>Articulate KCD contributions to date.</p> <p>Coordinate regional programs and services portfolio project.</p> <p>Participate in the development of an outreach and marketing plan.</p>	Within an expanded timeline, the PSCD will run as a more cohesive unit, better able to assist caucus members with resource management priorities and capacity issues.
Engage in state-wide professional development.	Educational opportunities and certificates better enable staff to function and provide for clients.	Participate in educational opportunities and professional certifications (for example, riparian/dairy professional certification).	Ongoing professional programs will be explored.
Advisory Committee Outreach.	Provide better communication and build collaboration between KCD and stakeholders.	Build collaborative relationship with Advisory Committee and community members.	Advisory Committee is a valued resource to KCD and provides meaningful guidance to the Board. Membership in the Committee is sought after by a diverse group of stakeholders.

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Community-led conservation is most successful with cultural, geographic, and ethnic diversity that enhances KCD's impact.	Engage diversity, equity, and inclusion training for staff and board. Provide budget and facilitator for Racial Equity Change Team.	Increase in the diversity of the Board/staff and stakeholders. Greater participation in KCD's programs and services.
Strengthen existing tribal relations and foster opportunities with additional tribes.	Tribes present an important component and viewpoint for KCD.	Partner with Muckleshoot Tribe for targeted farm services on Enumclaw plateau.	Greater participation from various tribes in King County.

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Member Jurisdiction Grant Program.	KCD will increase our region's capacity to protect and enhance natural resources by providing financial incentives in the form of grants to 35 Member Jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations. Grants awarded will meet KCD's strategic priorities as well as the program's criteria which includes four natural resource improvement action areas: direct improvement of natural resources, education and outreach, pilot and demonstration, and capacity building.	<p>Continue to provide an easy application process.</p> <p>Continue partnership grant program with City of Seattle that incorporates racial equity funding criteria.</p> <p>Continue outreach to cities about grant funding.</p> <p>Evaluate 25% of closed grants to determine outcomes.</p> <p>Update policies to adapt to grantees changing needs.</p> <p>Update grant application with questions about evaluation and equity in partnership with Advisory Committee.</p>	<p>Continue to provide an easy application process for 35 jurisdictions</p> <p>Continue partnership grant program with the City of Seattle that incorporates racial equity funding criteria.</p> <p>Continue outreach to cities about grant funding and services available.</p> <p>Evaluate 25% of closed grants to determine outcomes.</p> <p>Update policies to adapt to changing needs of grantees.</p> <p>Update grant application with questions about evaluation and equity in partnership with Advisory Committee.</p>