



Appendix F: Focus Areas, Objectives, and Actions to Conserve, Restore, and Manage Forestland in King County

CONTINUED ACTION PROGRESS

- Significant and sustainable progress
- Progress made but more to be done
- No significant progress

NEW ACTION PRIORITY RANKING

- NOW
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- LATER

FOCUS AREA 1: PROTECTION, RESTORATION, AND STEWARDSHIP OF PRIVATE FORESTLAND

Goal: Effectively use King County resources to enable private forestland owners to protect, restore, and steward their lands. Increase the number of landowners who prepare comprehensive forest stewardship plans, implement forest stewardship practices, and access financial and technical support needed to implement those plans.

	Objective 1.1: Protect remaining priority privately-owned forest tracts not currently under easement, with special focus on protecting contiguous blocks of forest and meeting LCI goals.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	11.1 Partner with DNR and land trusts to secure easements on forestland.	King County has purchased conservation easements to permanently protect nearly 150,000 acres of forestland, most of which will be managed for sustainable timber production. King County will continue to use grants, TDR, Forest Carbon, and other funding sources to continue to secure easements on priority forest.
<input type="checkbox"/>	11.2 Increase public engagement and communication around objectives for acquisition and restoration (e.g., LCI).	King County and partners have focused significant resources on outreach and education regarding Countywide land conservation efforts (e.g., LCI, Conservation Futures Tax), but also work closely with local stakeholders when pursuing individual acquisitions and management actions.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11.3 Support acquisition of additional working-forest conservation easements on commercial forestland that are LCI targets.	Although there was significant attention to acquiring easements on working forestland (e.g., Snoqualmie Tree Farm), recent efforts have diminished somewhat. ;
<input type="checkbox"/>	11.4 Design conservation easements to include an allowance for sustainable timber harvest.	All County-acquired easements that protect forestland are developed to meet conservation objectives and landowner goals. When appropriate, sustainable timber production is accommodated.



Appendix F Continued

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	Objective 1.1: Protect remaining priority privately-owned forest tracts not currently under easement, with special focus on protecting contiguous blocks of forest and meeting LCI goals.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	11.5 Regularly monitor all working forest conservation easements to ensure terms of easement are being honored and work with forestland owners to resolve any issues of noncompliance.	All forest easements are monitored regularly and any issues of noncompliance are addressed in a timely manner.
<input type="checkbox"/>	11.6 Maintain CUT/PBRS program capacity to manage current program and explore opportunities to enhance existing current use programs to further reduce taxation-driven forestland conversion rates.	DNRP has supported 2 FTEs dedicated to CUT/PBRS as well as a partial FTE to manage the program. Staff is able to manage current workload.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11.7 Ensure sufficient staff resources to meet LCI expectation for greater CUT/PBRS contribution and explore new approaches to expanding CUT/PBRS programs.	The CUT/PBRS team will need additional resources to market program to owners of LCI priority forestland while continuing to support the baseline level of program enrollments.
	11.8 Evaluate forest cover and condition for land identified as high conservation value in the LCI.	

	Objective 1.2: Improve access to needed technical assistance to enable private forest landowners to retain forest cover and enhance forest health.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2.1 Provide support for and increase the capacity of state and local service providers to deliver forest stewardship technical assistance and advice to small forest landowners.	King County and a number of agencies and organizations provide technical assistance to forest landowners and, while demand is great, there is reasonable capacity to meet the demand.
	1.2.2 Identify and remove barriers for forestry-related businesses to ensure reasonable access to forestry contracting and consulting services.	



Appendix F Continued

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Objective 1.2: Improve access to needed technical assistance to enable private forest landowners to retain forest cover and enhance forest health.	Accomplishments
1.2.3 Research best available science to better understand the linkage between forest protection/management and stormwater management as well as other ecosystem services and develop and implement science-based policies and practices to manage and conserve these ecosystem services; support delivery of forestry programs aligned with water quality and stormwater runoff management priorities.	

Objective 1.3: Encourage forest stewardship through education, planning, active forest management, and partnerships.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/> 1.3.1 Advise landowners about programs that support forest stewardship on private land.	All agencies and organizations that provide technical support to forest landowners educate landowners about programs that provide cost-share support for stewardship activities.
<input type="checkbox"/> 1.3.2 Collaborate with KCD to expand capacity for increased delivery of technical and financial assistance services to forest landowners through KCD Rural Forest Stewardship, Wildfire Resiliency, and Landowner Incentive programs.	Although there is need for greater funding of stewardship incentive programs, KCD receives broad support for their programs and King County specifically acknowledged the value of KCD forestry programs during recent discussions around renewal of their rates and charges.
<input type="checkbox"/> 1.3.3 Collaborate with KCD and WSU Cooperative Extension Forestry to expand capacity for increased delivery of education (especially coached stewardship planning) and educational resources that enable forest landowners to meet both personal and King County management objectives.	King County, KCD, and WSU Extension annually collaborate on a series of in-person and virtual coached stewardship planning courses that continue to be in high demand. COVID-19 forced a transition to 100% virtual workshops, but the response was positive and holding more of the workshops virtually is a viable option to accommodate additional workshops.












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	Objective 1.3: Encourage forest stewardship through education, planning, active forest management, and partnerships.	Accomplishments
	1.3.4 When developing stewardship plans, include consideration of activities ongoing or planned for adjacent properties (both public and private) to leverage resources, enhance benefits, scale-up contractor and consultant services, and avoid unintended consequences.	
	1.3.5 Investigate and, if appropriate, establish a County-owned and -managed “demonstration forest” to serve as an example of forest management for landowners and an outdoor classroom that demonstrates various sustainable forest practices for students and King County residents; develop management and monitoring plans and secure project funding to begin active management by 2025.	
	Objective 1.4: Increase the availability and access to financial incentive programs to support implementation of forest stewardship practices by small forest landowners.	Accomplishments
	1.4.1 Increase capacity for cost-share funding to forest landowners implementing on-the-ground forest stewardship practices.	There are a number of programs that provide financial support to forest landowners but demand far exceeds available funding.
	1.4.2 Partner with DNR and Washington State Conservation Commission to increase capacity to deliver financial incentives to forest landowners.	
	Objective 1.5: Promote understanding of the benefits of commercial timber production in King County and support increased production of locally produced forest products.	Accomplishments
	1.5.1 Explore opportunities to provide incentives for using locally sourced lumber and other forest products, starting with King County government projects.	
	1.5.2 Support small forest landowners maintaining working forests in King County by providing tax incentives for local sawmills.	












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	Objective 1.5: Promote understanding of the benefits of commercial timber production in King County and support increased production of locally produced forest products.	Accomplishments
	1.5.3 Research strategies to incentivize greater use of locally sourced forest products that have been employed elsewhere and pursue adoption of appropriate strategies in King County.	
	1.5.4 Support efforts to develop markets for pulpwood.	
	1.5.5 Support DLS to ensure wood recycling operations remain viable and accessible and meet industry standards for operation.	
	1.5.6 Explore opportunities to use pulpwood and wood waste in cogeneration plants.	
	1.5.7 Collaborate within King County departments (DNRP and DLS) to support the establishment of permanent and mobile mills and kilns.	
	1.5.8 Support businesses focused on using local products (e.g., cross-laminated timber).	

	Objective 1.6: Reduce operating and permitting costs for forestry activities and remove permitting and other roadblocks to forestry practices.	Accomplishments
	1.6.1 Clarify permitting process and fee structure for forestry activities not governed by FPA.	King County Regulatory/Permitting Specialist has been working with RFC to identify permitting challenges and to effect changes (e.g., increasing exempt forestry structure size).
	1.6.2 Eliminate the need for King County Clearing and Grading permit for fire risk reduction activities within 150 feet of home.	DNRP staff have been working with DLS permitting staff to identify a pathway to simplify/eliminate permitting requirements.














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	Objective 1.6: Reduce operating and permitting costs for forestry activities and remove permitting and other roadblocks to forestry practices.	Accomplishments
	1.6.3 Ensure there is adequate forestry expertise on DNRP/DLS-PD permit team.	DNRP Regulatory/Permitting Specialist is a trained forester with extensive commercial forestry experience that coordinates permit team meetings. Team meeting agendas are shared with KCD so they can contribute forestry expertise when appropriate.
	1.6.4 Revise and update Forest Stewardship Plan Public Rule to establish framework for stewardship plans and ensure plans include actions to address climate change and increased wildfire risk.	Updates to the Forest Stewardship Public Rule are under consideration by DLS. More substantial changes have been proposed but will be pursued via standard Code change pathway.
	1.6.5 Advocate for changes to County Code and Comprehensive Plan to ensure landowners are able to manage forestland and avoid loss of forest cover and to ensure other segments of forest industry are retained, including support for small mills and kilns.	DNRP staff worked with RFC to review current code as it pertains to operations of small mills and kilns. Several code changes were recommended and will be pursued.
	1.6.6 Cap costs of permits for forest practices as has been done with agriculture.	
	1.6.7 Revise King County Code so that permits are not granted to applicants with outstanding compliance issues on the same or other applicant-owned property.	
	1.6.8 Revise King County Code to ensure that restoration activities are not treated the same as conversion/development (e.g., alternative permitting pathway).	
	1.6.9 Minimize regulatory burden for construction and maintenance activities related to forest management; eliminate duplication with state and County regulations.	
	1.6.10 Repair rural bridges to comply with loading and code requirements that accommodate log hauling and transportation of other forest products associated with noncommercial and commercial forest management activities.	



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	Objective 1.7: Explore opportunities to expand programs that monetize ecosystem services on private and public land.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.7.1 Expand King County’s Forest Carbon Program to enable enrollment of privately-owned forestland.	King County launched the Rural Forest Carbon Program in December 2020. The program may be expanded in 2022 to include non-County properties (including privately-owned forestland).
	1.7.2 Educate forest landowners with holdings that do not meet King County LCI protection criteria about forest protection options, including CUT, PBRS, and alternative incentives for forestland protection such as the Rural Forest Carbon Program and TDR.	
	1.7.3 Increase program marketing to educate landowners about CUT, PBRS, TDR, and other program availability, targeting owners of LCI priority properties.	

FOCUS AREA 2: ACQUISITION, RESTORATION, AND STEWARDSHIP OF COUNTY-OWNED FORESTLAND

Goal Statement: Secure sufficient funding to achieve the forestland preservation goals described in the Land Conservation Initiative and provide managers with sufficient resources to implement forest stewardship plans. County-owned forestland should be examples of multiple use management that protects biodiversity, enhances carbon sequestration, provides recreation opportunities, and demonstrates ecologically sustainable and economically viable timber production.

	Objective 2.1: Strengthen stewardship planning protocols for King County forestland.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.1.1 Include forest stewardship policies that highlight restoration of natural forest composition and structure in the next version of the Parks Division Open Space Plan.	The Open Space Plan will be revised in 2022.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.1.2 Ensure that stewardship of all forestland acquisitions is guided by approved plans. Brief, early action plans are required prior to any acquisition, and formal forest stewardship plans should be completed for all large properties within 6-12 months of acquisition.	Early action plans have not been developed.



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	Objective 2.1: Strengthen stewardship planning protocols for King County forestland.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.1.3 Develop standard template for Forest Stewardship Plans for units of 200 acres or more.	Plan template developed but is undergoing review and revision.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.1.4 Complete Forest Stewardship Plans for all Parks Division forest units of 200 acres or more by 2025; plans clearly state desired future conditions and/or desired services to be provided/generated.	Forest stewardship plans are being developed for all Parks Division forest units that are at least 200 acres in size.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.1.5 Support coordination among agencies, especially where ownerships are adjacent (e.g., USFS, DNR, SPU) to ensure that off-site impacts are minimized and resource benefits can be taken to scale.	Although agencies collaborate frequently, additional coordination is needed during plan development and strategy implementation.
	2.1.6 Develop and implement streamlined planning process for smaller units.	
	2.1.7 Work with local, state, and federal partners to accelerate the rate of forestland acquisition to meet LCI goals.	

	Objective 2.2: Implement and monitor stewardship plans for all Parks Division forest units of 200 acres or more.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.2.1 Complete development of 5- to 10-year forest stewardship operating plans for King County-owned forestland that aggregate all high-priority stewardship actions for all units, regardless of size, with initial focus on units of 200 acres or more.	Initial near-term forest stewardship operating plan to be finished in 2022 and will be updated annually.



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	Objective 2.2: Implement and monitor stewardship plans for all Parks Division forest units of 200 acres or more.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.2.2 Explore additional opportunities to ensure adequate resources are available for restoration and management of County forestland and consider stewardship needs of all newly acquired properties.	Additional resources needed to meet accelerated rate of restoration.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.2.3 Dedicate at least one forester FTE to Parks Division for forest stewardship work.	

	Objective 2.3: Identify opportunities to monetize ecosystem services to fund forestland acquisition and management.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.3.1 Expand King County Rural Forest Carbon Project to support County land acquisition program.	Forest Carbon Program launched in 2020 and revenue will be dedicated to acquisition of additional forest properties.

FOCUS AREA 3: WILDFIRE HAZARD REDUCTION




Goal Statement: Develop and implement comprehensive wildfire plans that address issues related to wildfire risk reduction, wildfire response, and wildfire recovery. Improve forest resilience to climate change and implement preparedness plans to reduce forestland acres that experience uncontrolled burning.

	Objective 3.1: Expand delivery of community and landowner wildfire risk management and safety planning services.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.1.1 Increase cost-share funds to support wildfire risk reduction strategies, including construction of interior access roads.	Landowners are made aware of availability of cost-share programs (e.g., KCD, NRCS), but funding is not adequate to meet demand.








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	Objective 3.1: Expand delivery of community and landowner wildfire risk management and safety planning services.	Accomplishments
	3.1.2 Emphasize fire plan development and implementation at the community scale and ensure that there is collaboration among all parties engaged in wildfire risk reduction to deliver services more efficiently and effectively.	King County has begun to pull partners together to develop a Countywide assessment of wildfire risk reduction, response, and recovery.
	3.1.3 Deliver wildfire safety and fire risk management services to King County forest landowners and increase capacity to deliver fire risk management and fire resiliency planning to more rural King County forest landowners in the urban/rural wildland interface.	KCD has been leading community wildfire education but numerous King County agencies are intending to ramp up investments.

	Objective 3.2: Develop comprehensive approach to rural wildfire planning.	Accomplishments
	3.2.1 Increase frequency of roadside maintenance, including mowing and control of flammable invasive species such as Scotch broom to reduce fire ignition along publicly maintained roads.	No focused conversations with DLS Roads Division held thus far.
	3.2.2 Support Office of Emergency Management coordination of comprehensive wildfire preparedness, response, and recovery plan.	
	3.2.3 Create “wildfire roundtable” that includes agencies and partner organizations focused on wildfire risk reduction in King County; meet regularly to understand roles and responsibilities, coordinate across entities to capitalize on opportunities and strengths, and share information and lessons learned.	



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Objective 3.3: Reduce risk to public forestland from park visitors.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/> 3.3.1 Increase communications with the public about closures and burn bans; collaborate with adjacent agencies and landowners to ensure there is a common message.	Parks currently posts properties and informs neighbors when needed, but additional collaboration with other agencies is needed.

Objective 3.4: Improve King County capacity for wildfire response and training.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.4.1 Deploy staff during and after high fire risk weather events for early fire detection.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.4.2 Explore opportunities to train staff to be prepared to respond to wildfire in some capacity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.4.3 Enhance vehicle fleet to include vehicles and equipment capable of supporting early wildfire response.





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FOCUS AREA 4: TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Goal Statement: Recognize and honor Tribal sovereignty and historic connections to forests in King County, which includes engaging with Tribes early in land use planning efforts.

	Objective 4.1: Consult with Tribal Governments about forest management and protection.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.1.1 Explicitly recognize Tribal treaty rights and Tribal sovereignty.	King County is beginning to include explicit land acknowledgments in documents and presentations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.1.2 Recognize that each Tribe is a sovereign government with their own policies and processes.	King County Tribal Relations staff provide direction and training to program/project staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.1.3 Recognize the history, culture, and tradition of Tribes who historically occupied King County and the importance of forests to those Tribes in all documents related to and events held on land historically occupied or managed by local Tribes.	King County is focusing additional resources to ensure staff understand historical and cultural significance of project sites and to ensure management actions respect that history (e.g., Cultural Resources Review on all ground-disturbing activities, 30-Year Forest Plan).

	Objective 4.2: Engage with Tribal Governments early in any forest planning process.	Accomplishments
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.2.1 Support greater engagement with all affected Tribes to support forest management and protection at a landscape scale.	Potentially affected Tribes are contacted whenever significant forest management actions are proposed, but more needs to be done to proactively address large-scale forest management and protection plans.



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Objective 4.2: Engage with Tribal Governments early in any forest planning process.	Accomplishments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4.2.2 Ensure all County departments have pre-project planning protocols to identify and protect culturally sensitive sites prior to initiation of any construction or site management actions and inadvertent discovery plans to guide response should artifacts be discovered during construction; Tribes should review plans and protocols.	Parks Division and WLRD have dedicated Cultural Resources staff that ensure proposed activities minimize risk to known and unknown sensitive areas. Crew training is incorporated into most stewardship projects and inadvertent discovery plans are developed.





King County

Rural Forest Commission Strategic Priorities

Recommendations and Actions for Conservation
of Forestland in King County

February 2022



King County

Department of
Natural Resources and Parks



Clean Water
Healthy Habitat