



King County



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King Conservation District and King County Council agree on reauthorization of funds for 2007

SEATTLE--The King Conservation District and King County have reached an agreement in negotiations regarding the authorization of the District's special assessment for 2007. Authorized by the Metropolitan King County Council yesterday and approved by the King Conservation District board last night, the special assessment funds approximately \$5.8 million annually for local natural resource conservation work in King County over the next three years.

"We are quite pleased with this well-balanced program of work," said King Conservation District Chair Matt Livengood. "The King Conservation District board and staff worked hard throughout the year to listen to the needs of our constituents and to propose a conservation program that would meet the natural resource conservation interests of the urban and rural communities served by the King Conservation District."

Approximately half of the funds will go toward implementing projects included in the three salmon recovery plans for the Snoqualmie, Green/Duwamish and Cedar River/Lake Washington watersheds. Another portion of the funds are utilized by the member cities for projects within the individual cities. The District will utilize approximately \$1.8 million to accomplish their annual plan of work and to perform administrative oversight of the funds.

Councilmember Larry Gossett, chair of the Council's Committee of the Whole, publicly thanked Councilmembers Larry Phillips, Dow Constantine and Reagan Dunn for their sponsorship of the ordinances and achieving consensus with the stakeholders and negotiating the terms of the interlocal agreement between the two agencies.

"This assessment will go a long way toward improving conservation efforts in King County," said Councilmember Phillips. "Recovering endangered salmon and helping farmers stay in King County takes more than just wishful thinking. These funds will enable us to get to work on water quality and agricultural projects that will make a real difference to farmers, fish, and all King County residents."

"Restoring habitat for Chinook salmon benefits all citizens of King County," said Councilmember Constantine, chair of the watershed planning effort in the Green/Duwamish watershed (WRIA 9). "This assessment is an important step in fulfilling our region's salmon recovery obligations."

"I'm proud to have worked with the Conservation District to find a solution that will build long-term bridges with the County," said Councilmember Dunn. Dunn sponsored an amendment adopted by the Council to create an advisory committee to investigate updated and new best available science and make funding recommendations for landowner incentive programs. The advisory committee would present its findings at the direction of KCD to WRIA forums and member jurisdictions.

"The safeguards in this agreement will ensure that best scientific practices will be implemented to protect people, salmon, and the environment," said Dunn.

The King Conservation District is a special purpose district that promotes the voluntary stewardship of land, water, and other natural resources and promotes economically viable agriculture. The King Conservation District, along with 46 other conservation districts in Washington State, are authorized under chapter 89.08 Revised Code of Washington, and are independent of local county governments. State law, however, directs the King Conservation District to seek authorization of its special assessment with the Metropolitan King County Council, which has the authority to approve or modify and approve a King Conservation District proposal for a system of special assessments.

Authorization of the special assessment allows King Conservation District to continue to expand strategic initiatives and outreach efforts to land owners in King County.

The King Conservation District is a natural resources assistance agency authorized by the State of Washington and guided by the Washington State Conservation Commission. It is a free service for King County landowners, and also provides non-landowners with educational programs and opportunities to participate in activities that help preserve the county's abundant natural resources.

King Conservation staff is available to assist residents of King County manage their land and water resources. It promotes conservation through demonstration projects and educational events; and provides technical assistance and, in some cases, provides or points the way to funds which may be available for projects. The District has no regulatory or enforcement authority—it only works with those who choose to work with it.

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