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**June 11, 2009**  
**PUBLIC COMMENT DRAFT**

**KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**Assessment Appropriation Plan**

**Proposed System of Assessments (2010 -2014)**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

RCW 89.08.400<sup>1</sup> defines the process and requirements for a conservation district and the legislative authority of the county in which the conservation district operates to authorize special assessments to finance the activities of a conservation district.

On December 12, 2006, the King County Council approved KC Ordinance No. 15661, which authorized the current assessment for three (3) years at the rate of \$10 per parcel, effective January 1, 2007, through December 31, 2009.

The King Conservation District (“District”) submits a proposal for a system of assessments that, if approved by the King County Council, would become effective January 1, 2010, and would continue through December 31, 2014.

The District prepared this Assessment Appropriation Plan (“the Plan”) following six (6) public comment sessions held throughout the district between [date] and [date]. Public comment was received until [date]. The District also engaged the Conservation District’s Advisory Committee for comment and advice on the Plan through meetings held on \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

The funds received from an approved special assessment for calendar year 2010 will be utilized for District approved programs and services for the benefit of lands situated within the boundaries of the District pursuant to RCW 89.08.220. District programs and services will be focused on the accomplishment of the District’s mission, vision, and strategic goals; which will be focused in three priority area: (1) *Engaging Landowners to Achieve Community Based Stewardship*, (2) *Improve the Sustainability of Working Lands*, and to (3) *Extending the District Mission through Strategic Partnerships*.

For the proposed 2010-2014 assessment period, the District has provided an innovated structure to its presentation of proposed budget appropriations, and has a fully integrated program budget for all District programs. This new presentation of District programs and services will provide for more transparency around the use of all assessment funds.

All special assessment collections remitted to the District during calendar year 2010 will be utilized consistent with the Plan outlined in the sections that follow.

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<sup>1</sup> The Washington State Attorney General provided an opinion in 2006, which provides further guidance to the process and authority of county legislative bodies in the approval of conservation district assessments. See. AGO 2006 No. 8.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In preparation of the District's Assessment Appropriation Plan for the proposed system of assessment for the period 2010 - 2014, the District Board of Supervisors focused first on the District's Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Goals as the framework for the programs and services that the district provides. Establishing secure and reliable funding for the District and building the capacity to deliver effective services are strategic goals of the District, the achievement of which are an integral purpose of this Plan.

## **KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES.**

The King Conservation District, as a special purpose district, created pursuant to Title 89.08 RCW, is guided by the mission and mandate of that legislation, which directs the general mission and purpose of conservation districts, which includes direction to conserve, protect, improve and maintain, "renewable natural resources," which include: *land, air, water, vegetation, fish, wildlife, wild rivers, wilderness, natural beauty, scenery and open space*. RCW 89.08.020. The focus of conservation districts is to work with and through landowners and managers to achieve conservation outcomes that are ecologically and economically sustainable. For the King Conservation District this includes special emphasis on conservation in the altered and developed environment, which exists in King County. In addition to its legislative mandate, the King Conservation District receives guidance from the Washington State Conservation Commission, and as one of 47 conservation districts in Washington State, is cooperatively engaged in statewide efforts to conserve renewable natural resources.

Consistent with the Conservation Districts Law (Title 89.08 RCW), the King Conservation District has established its own specific mission, vision, and statement of its values, which reflects the unique needs of the District's constituents; and to guide and govern the programs, services, and projects that the District delivers.

**Mission:**                **"To promote the sustainable uses of natural resources through responsible stewardship"**

**Vision:**                **"King Conservation District will be recognized as a leader in achieving community based stewardship of lands within the District, with economically and environmentally sustainable working lands, vibrant agriculture, and technically sound land, water, and habitat stewardship embraced by all citizens."**

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- Values:**
- **Service**
  - **Respect**
  - **Cooperation**
  - **Responsibility**
  - **Effectiveness**
  - **Accountability**
  - **Transparency**

The District's mission, vision, and values provide the framework for the District's strategic goals, which the District's Board of Supervisors have adopted to guide the programs, services, and other activities of the District in order to create a government agency that is transparent, effective, and accountable to the citizens that it serves. Above all, in all of its programs, services, and projects, the District is essentially in the "people business" since all of the conservation and natural resource improvements that the District accomplishes is with and through the people the District works with.

### **KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT STRATEGIC GOALS**

In setting the long term direction of the King Conservation District, the District's Board of Supervisors engaged in a process of clarifying the mission, vision, and values of the King Conservation District into clear and achievable strategic goals. These strategic goals provide the framework for the District's programs, services, and priority areas. The purpose of these strategic goals is to focus the resources of the district to create and deliver the most value and benefit to the residents and citizens of the District, and provide a framework for evaluating existing and future programs, services, and projects.

- *Strategic Goal 1: (SG1) Empower landowners to sustainably manage the natural resources on their land and effectively engage them to implement conservation best management practices throughout the King Conservation District (including rural, suburban, and urban environments).*
- *Strategic Goal 2: (SG2): Significantly increase the implementation of best management practices and conservation projects throughout the King Conservation District (including rural, suburban, and urban environments).*
- *Strategic Goal 3: (SG3) Significantly improve the sustainability of working lands within the boundaries of the King Conservation District.*
- *Strategic Goal 4: (SG4) Extend the mission of the King Conservation District through effective strategic partnerships.*

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- *Strategic Goal 5: (SG5) Effectively engage in conservation policy development in order to remove barriers to the long term implementation of sustainable conservation practices on land within the District.*
- *Strategic Goal 6: (SG6) Significantly build the organizational capacity of the King Conservation District in order to effectively accomplish its mission, goals, and objectives.*
- *Strategic Goal 7: (SG7) Establish secure and sustainable funding to accomplish Mission of King Conservation District.*

## **PRIORITY AREAS FOR ASSESSMENT FUNDING**

### **Introduction.**

The District will use assessment funds to achieve the District's mission and its Strategic Goals. These goals are focused into three priority areas, for which assessment funds will be utilized. These priority areas take the District's mission and focus its activities on the core competencies of the District, and extend that mission through the effective use of strategic partnerships to leverage the competencies of the District. A focus on working lands, specifically agriculture continues to be an ongoing commitment of the District, even as its programs and services continue to reach beyond its traditional rural roots and meet the needs of urban and suburban landowners.

### **Priority One (P1): Engaging Landowners to Achieve Community Based Stewardship.**

The District will utilize assessment funding for programs and services that achieve Community Based Stewardship. The District's core mission and competency is the engagement of private landowners and managers in the effective stewardship of renewable natural resources under their control. Working with landowners to become cooperators in conservation is what the District has done for 60 years.

The core programs of the district involve education, site specific planning, and implementation of natural resource management practices. Education that raises the awareness of natural resource issues and conservation needs, site specific planning that engages landowners in a personal understanding and commitment to the conservation needs of their land, and resources and tools to implement conservation on the ground, are all important parts of engaging landowners. The District plays a unique role as a non-regulatory government agency; the District achieves its outcomes through technical skills and a trusted relationship with landowners. It is this trusted relationship is the foundation for lasting change.

**Education.** District programs and services that focus on education and community engagement include *adult education workshops* related to topics of water quality, soil

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conservation, nutrient management, marine shoreline and other habitats. These programs educate landowners on natural resource management issues, and District programs and services that address those issues. Farm tours and other demonstration site workshops provide opportunities for community members to see by example effective implementation of conservation practices in action. These demonstration sites and education programs regularly involve existing District cooperators voluntarily donating time and space for these programs; further committing them to conservation.

***District Programs:***

- Urban and Rural Stewardship Education Programs
- Farm Tours
- Envirothon
- Landowner Education Workshops

***Natural Resource Conservation Planning.*** At the core of community based stewardship is individual landowner engagement and conservation. Site specific planning is the first step in the implementation of natural resource conservation practices that protect and enhance water quality, improve fish and wildlife habitat, reduce stormwater runoff, and control noxious weeds. Planning involves specific services to dairy operations as well as other agricultural operations to assist with improvements to sustainable production, assistance with meeting local regulations and associated permitting requirements, as well as providing assistance to landowners and agricultural operations referred to the District by local or state regulatory authorities. The District continues to play a vital role in providing conservation planning services that provide opportunities for landowners to receive permitting fee reductions and the easing of regulatory restrictions. Site specific resource planning also lays out the roadmap for implementation of conservation best practices and conservation projects.

***Technical Assistance Services.*** The District provides technical assistance services to landowners and land managers implementing natural resource management practices. District technical assistance services include site specific assessment, planning and implementation assistance on water quality protection and enhancement, soil conservation and fish and wildlife habitat protection and enhancement. These services also may include ongoing support to individuals implementing natural resource management plans developed by the District.

***District Programs:***

- Conservation Planning & Conservation Farm Planning
- Technical Assistance Services
- Dairy Planning Program
- Nutrient Management Services
- Wetland Plant Cooperative / Reclaimed Water Facility
- Marine Shorelines Program

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**Implementation.** The District will continue to turn plans into action; by achieving conservation implementation with cooperators and other partners. Implementation of conservation practices and best management practices happen in a number of ways, by landowner cooperators themselves as well as projects and actions taken in cooperation with the District. The District also engages in a number of conservation projects, managed directly by the District.

***District Programs:***

- Conservation Projects
- Stream Enhancement Services
- District Engineering Services
- Contracted Services
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Wetland Plant Cooperative / Reclaimed Water Facility
- Bareroot Plant Sale / Native Plant Program
- Volunteer Program / Conservation Volunteer Training
- Landowner Incentive Program (KCD-LIP)

**Priority Two (P2): Improve the Sustainability of Working Lands.**

The District will utilize assessment funds to provide programs and services directed to enhance the sustainability of working lands within the boundaries of the district. These programs and services will support all aspects of sustainability: ecological, economic, and human, all of which are required for long-term conservation efforts to last. For the District, working lands include those lands contemplated by RCW 89.08.020, as lands including renewable natural resources, which include agricultural lands, rural forest lands, and other lands utilized in connection with renewable natural resources.

District programs and services are designed to support sustainable local agriculture within the District, through direct producer assistance, support services, and through partnerships with other organizations and agencies with a focus on sustainable agriculture. Programs and services related to this priority area include supporting direct marketing of agricultural products through community supported agriculture (CSA), farmers markets, implementation of innovative nutrient management, and alternative energy. Continued support to education and community building programs such as *The Harvest Festival* and similar programs. Continued support of eco-friendly agricultural labeling programs such as “Salmon-Safe”, and King County Agricultural Initiatives, and continued support of local initiatives such as *Farming and the Environment*, and the *Cascade Harvest Coalition*.

***District Programs:***

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- Dairy Planning Program
- Nutrient Management Services
- WSU-Extension Programs
- Stewardship Partners – Salmon Safe Program
- District Sponsorships

**Priority Three (P3): Extending the District Mission through Strategic Partnerships.**

The District will utilize assessment funds to provide programs, services, and grants to landowners, member jurisdictions, WRIA Forums, and other community organizations, to extend the District's mission by leveraging strategic partnerships. This will happen through existing programs and partnerships as well as through new partnerships being developed.

**Partnering for Community Based Stewardship.** At the core of its mission, partnering with individual landowners and communities of landowners are where conservation districts create the most value. By working with others, the conservation district protects and enhances the environment now and for future generations. Programs and projects targeted at communities, watersheds, and sub-basins, can significantly improve the environmental and economic sustainability of the targeted area.

***District Programs:***

- Conservation Planning & Conservation Farm Planning
- Volunteer Program / Conservation Volunteer Training
- Suburban / Urban Natural Resource Conservation Programs
- KCD-Landowner Incentive Program (KCD-LIP)

**Partnering for Puget Sound Recovery.** The District is uniquely positioned to play an important role in the recovery of Puget Sound. With the completion of the *Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda*, a number of actions were identified, which are ideally suited to the conservation districts surrounding the Puget Sound, many that must be accomplished with and through the cooperators of conservation district, landowners themselves. The engagement of private landowners and managers in voluntary conservation is a necessary component for successful Puget Sound Recovery. In addition to watershed recovery and salmon recovery efforts, which were also identified in the *Action Agenda*, and already being addressed by the District, additional community based stewardship, conservation projects, and other landowner engagement actions have been identified, for which the District is ideally suited to partner in these efforts, with the Puget Sound Partnership, as well as with landowners, other agency partners, and non-governmental organizations and community groups.

***District Programs:***

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- Conservation Projects
- Sub-Basin Projects
- WRIA Grants Program
- Member Jurisdiction Grants Program
- Marine Shoreline Program

District programs, in addition to watershed recovery efforts, include community based conservation initiatives with a focus on site specific natural resource planning,

**Partnering for Watershed Recovery.** Watershed recovery, and related salmon recovery efforts have been an emphasis of the District for nearly ten years. The District was instrumental in providing support to community building in the development of *Watershed / Salmon Recovery Plans* in WRIA 7, WRIA 8, and WRIA 9. The District has provided funding for the implementation of those Salmon Recovery Plans as part of its WRIA/Member Jurisdiction Grants Program; in addition to appropriating assessment funding, the District has provided additional programs and services in support of these salmon recovery efforts in the completion of these plans, including the King Conservation District - Snoqualmie Watershed Opportunity Fund, the King Conservation District - WRIA 9 Watershed Forum *Shared Endeavor*<sup>2</sup>, the King Conservation District - *Marine Shoreline Program*, and other programs and services directed to the restoration of King County's three major watersheds and many sub-basins. The District will continue to support the completion of these plans, as an important part of regional natural resource conservation efforts.

***District Programs:***

- WRIA Grants Program
- Member Jurisdiction Grants Program
- Opportunity Fund Grants Program (WRIA 7)
- Joint Endeavor (WRIA 9)
- Marine Shoreline Program

**Partnering with Member Jurisdictions.** The District will continue to work with member jurisdictions, through its programs, services, and grants. In addition to King County, there are 34 Member Jurisdictions inside the boundaries of the District with which the District works together to accomplish conservation. Whether it is funding through one of the District grants programs, or technical services and contracted services, the District's annual work plan will continue to include programs and services that support our partnering member jurisdictions.

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<sup>2</sup> The KCD WRIA 9 Shared Endeavor is a program still in development between the King Conservation District and WRIA 9.

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***District Programs:***

- Member Jurisdiction Grants Program
- Contracted Services
- Technical Assistance Services
- Low Impact Development (LID) Programs\*<sup>3</sup>
- Nat'l. Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) / Raingarden Programs.\*
- Conservation Planning & Conservation Farm Planning

**Partnering with Agencies and Community Organizations.** The District will continue to provide services and technical support to partner agencies and organizations that work with the District on projects and other conservation projects. In addition to our primary role in technical support, the District will continue to provide funding for opportunities to extend its mission through other government agencies and private organizations working on conservation projects and community based stewardship. Working with people to develop and grow strong community partnerships is an essential part of building trust and investing in long term results.

***District Programs:***

- WRIA Grants Program
- Member Jurisdiction Grants Program
- Technical Assistance Services
- GIS Development Program

## **KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT PROGRAMS**

The District's services and projects are carried out through a number of programs. These programs are organized around the core functions of the district:

- **Education and Community Engagement**
- **Natural Resource Conservation Planning and Technical Assistance**
- **Implementation and Conservation Projects**
- **District Grants Programs**
- **Strategic & Other District Initiatives**

District Programs are listed with a cross-reference to the three priorities on Attachment A.

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<sup>3</sup> Programs marked with an \* (asterisk) indicate programs that are currently in development at the District or with a partner of the District.

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**ASSESSMENT APPROPRIATION PLAN FOR 2010**

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**PROJECTED ASSESSMENT REVENUE 2010**

Revenue generated from 2010 assessments will be remitted by the King County Assessor to the District after deducting a 1% assessor's fee<sup>4</sup>. Interest accrued on assessment collections will be utilized by the District to fund District operations.

Estimated 2010 Assessment Collections	\$6,096,000.00
Estimated King County Assessor's Fee (1%)	\$ 60,960.00
Estimated Assessment Collections Remitted to District	<u>\$6,035,040.00</u>

*Available for Operations, Programs, and Services*

**PROPOSED ASSESSMENT APPROPRIATIONS BUDGET 2010**

The District will appropriate special assessment collections in 2010 to fund District Operations, Programs, and Services in a manner consistent with the proposed appropriations detailed below, and will provide proposed appropriations to the King County council on an annual basis on August 1, of each year during the assessment period.

<b>District Administration</b>	\$720,623.00	11.94%
• Board of Supervisors Support		
• Executive Services		
• Administrative & Financials Services		
• General District Overhead		
• Outreach & Communications		
<b>Education &amp; Community Engagement</b>	\$100,350.00	1.66%
• Stewardship Education Program		
• Envirothon		
• Farm Tours		
• Marine Shoreline Program Workshops		
• Landowner Education Workshops		
• Suburban / Urban Natural Resource Conservation Programs		

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<sup>4</sup> Pursuant to RCW 89.08.400 (4), the assessor's fee shall not exceed the actual cost of spreading and collecting the special assessment.

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<b>Natural Resource Conservation Planning &amp; Technical Assistance</b>	\$506,402.00	8.39%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technical Assistance Services</li><li>• Dairy Planning Program</li><li>• Nutrient Management Services</li><li>• Conservation Planning &amp; Conservation Farm Planning</li></ul>		
<b>Conservation Implementation &amp; Projects</b>	\$741,034.00	12.28%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conservation Projects</li><li>• District Engineering Services</li><li>• Stream Enhancement Services</li><li>• Conservation Services</li><li>• Contracted Services</li><li>• Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)</li><li>• Wetland Plant Cooperative / Reclaimed Water Facility</li><li>• Bareroot Plant Sale / Native Plant Program</li><li>• Volunteer Program / Conservation Volunteer Training</li><li>• Best Management Practices Implementation Projects</li><li>• Conservation Worker Training</li><li>• Contracted Services to Cities and Organizations</li></ul>		
<b>District Grants Programs</b>	\$3,655,579.00	60.57%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• WRIA Grants Program</li><li>• Member Jurisdiction Grants Program</li><li>• Opportunity Fund Grants Program (WRIA 7)</li><li>• Joint Endeavor (WRIA 9)*</li><li>• Landowner Incentive Program (KCD-LIP)</li><li>• Conservation Partnerships Program (CGD)</li></ul>		
<b>Strategic &amp; Other District Initiatives</b>	\$311,051.20	5.15%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• WSU-Extension Programs</li><li>• Stewardship Partners / LID &amp; Raingarden Programs</li><li>• District Sponsorships</li><li>• Best Available Science &amp; Engineering Initiative (BASE)</li><li>• Natural Resources Inventory Management (NRIM)</li><li>• GIS Development Program</li><li>• Puget Sound Conservation District Initiative</li><li>• Marine Shoreline Program Initiative</li><li>• Monitoring / Conservation Effectiveness Programming*</li></ul>		

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- Water Quality Monitoring Programs
- Puget Sound Recovery Programs\*

**Total:** \$6,035,040.00 100.00%

**ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ASSESSMENT FUNDS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

**Annual Reporting to King County**

The District is committed to open, transparent, and accountable government. In accordance with the statutory requirements of Title 89.08 RCW, the District will provide regular reporting to King County, with an Annual Report filed with the Clerk of the Council, which describes the programs, services, grants, and partnerships of the District.

**Stakeholder Advisory Group**

In addition to annual reporting to King County, the District will continue to have a community stakeholder involvement, with a stakeholder group, to provide feedback and guidance on District programs, services, and projects. The stakeholder group will be populated with a broad cross-section of agencies, organizations, and individuals from across King County, with representation at the Board of Supervisors. Stakeholder advisors will continue to play a greater role in community feedback and involvement with the programs, services, projects, and activities of the District, providing two-way feedback between the District and the community it serves.

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**ATTACHMENT A: Projected District Programs 2010**

<b>Program Groups &amp; Programs</b>	<b>Priority One (P1)</b>	<b>Priority Two (P2)</b>	<b>Priority Three (P3)</b>
<b>Education &amp; Community Engagement</b>			
Stewardship Education Program	X	X	X
Envirothon	X	X	X
Farm Tours	X	X	X
Marine Shoreline Program Workshops			
Landowner Education Workshops	X		X
Suburban / Urban Natural Resource Conservation Programs	X		
<b>Natural Resource Planning &amp; Technical Assistance Services</b>			
Conservation Planning & Conservation Farm Planning	X	X	
Technical Assistance Services	X	X	
Dairy Planning Program	X	X	
Nutrient Management Services	X	X	
<b>Conservation Implementation &amp; Projects</b>			
Conservation Projects	X	X	
District Engineering Services	X	X	X
Conservation Services	X	X	X
Contracted Services			X
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)		X	
Wetland Plant Cooperative / Reclaimed Water Facility			X
Bareroot Plant Sale / Native Plant Program			X
Volunteer Program / Conservation Volunteer Training		X	X
Best Management Practices Implementation Projects			
Stream Enhancement Services			X
Conservation Worker Training			X
Contracted Services to Cities and Organizations			X
<b>District Grant Programs</b>			
WRIA Grants Program	X		X
Member Jurisdiction Grants Program	X		X
KCD-Snoqualmie Forum Opportunity Fund Grants (WRIA 7)	X	X	X
KCD – WRIA 9 Shared Endeavor (WRIA 9)*			X
Landowner Incentive Program (KCD-LIP)	X	X	X
Conservation Partnerships Grants Program*			X

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	<b>Strategic &amp; Other District Initiatives</b>			
	WSU-Extension Programs	X	X	X
	Stewardship Partners / LID & Raingarden Programs		X	X
	District Sponsorships		X	X
	Best Available Science & Engineering Initiative (BASE)	X	X	
	Natural Resources Inventory Management (NRIM)	X		X
	GIS Development Program	X		X
	Puget Sound Conservation District Initiative	X	X	
	Marine Shoreline Program Initiative	X		X
	Monitoring / Conservation Effectiveness Programming	X	X	X
	Water Quality Monitoring Programs	X		
	Puget Sound Recovery Programs	X		X