



**King County**

**King County Rural Forest Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, May 18, 2023 – 9:00 am to 12:00 pm  
hybrid**

Commissioner	Present?	Commissioner (Ex-Officio/Non-Voting)	Present ?
Laurie Benson, WA DNR	✓	Brett Anderson, KCD	✓
Jeff Boyce, rural cities/professional forester	✓	Grace Garrison - WSU Extension	
Wendy Davis, private forest landowner	✓	New Ranger, USDA Forest Svc.	
Wyatt Golding, non-timber values of forest land	✓		
Li Hsi, forest landowner		Vacant, forest landowner	
Steve Horton, forest product user/forest landowner	✓	Vacant, forest landowner	
Mari Knutson, forest landowner	✓	Vacant, forest landowner	
Cindy Spiry, Snoqualmie Tribe		Vacant, forest landowner	
Grady Steere, large forest landowner	✓		
<i>five RFC members attending is a quorum</i>			
County Staff Present			
Richard Martin, DNRP		Jesse Reynolds DLS	
Wendy Sammarco, DNRP			
Public			
Jenny Coe		Tom Amorose	
Jon Matson		Eric Oien	
Mike Mackelwich		Matt Axe	
Mike Lasecki		Noah Barth	

**Motions**

01-05162023 Motion: A motion is made to send the RFC Firewise letter to the King County Executive and King County Council. Grady Steere makes the motion, Wyatt Golding seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

02-05162023 Motion: A motion is made to adjourn the May 2023 Rural Forest Commission meeting. Grady Steere makes the motion; Jeff Boyce seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

**Action Items**

Action item: All RFC members assist in the RFC recruitment efforts. The RFC members could suggest and encourage forest landowners and managers to consider applying to serve on the RFC. *(unending action item)*

Action item: Forest operations that are impacted by neighboring structures that are >+\$1,000 value, should remain Forest Practice (currently Clearing and Grading); craft and pursue resolution through KC Policy [tree length and a half from a structure triggers Clearing & Grading] *(holdover from previous RFC meeting)*

Action Item: Schedule/Coordinate Forest Field Tour for King County Council – Local Services and Land Use Committee *(note: RFC/KCC Field Tour request made for July August or September 2023; field tour on hold due to pressing KCC Local Services and Land Use Committee issues)*

Action Item: Draft a letter to King County Council Local Services and Land Use Committee emphasizing the

importance of forest and including specific asks. This letter will be a precursor to the field tour. Wyatt Golding will draft the letter; Wendy Davis will work on logistics to support the tour. (*on hold*)

Action Item: Schedule a presentation on the WA DNR's Trust Land Transfer Program

Action Item: Schedule a presentation on the WA DNR's Carbon Program

Action Item: Explore (amend the RFC Charter, motion etc.) adding a student member position to the Rural Forest Commission

Action Item: Schedule a presentation with Eric Beach (KC AFI Permitting Specialist) on Ag permits, alternate permitting pathways, class IV generals

Action Item: Schedule a presentation on King County's Conservation Futures tax levy – history-success stories-future (Ingrid Lundin?) (Link to RFC Report)

Action Item: Schedule a presentation on Trust for Public Lands and the intersection with forestland in King County (Laurie Benson)

Action Item: Schedule a presentation on status of King County current use taxation programs (relative to forestland – PBRs & DFL), TDR, 4:1 Program = current status of programs (committed acres), growth over time and forecasted future growth (link to RFC Report)

Action Item: Schedule a presentation on King County Land Conservation Initiative (link to RFC Report)

Action Item: Investigate forestland conversion issues relative to the six-year building moratorium

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### **Call to Order**

Laurie Benson called the meeting to order at 9:02. This meeting of the RFC is hybrid, with participation both in-person and online via MS Teams.

**Presentation: Wildfire Ready Neighbors Program** – Jenny Coe, Community Resilience Coordinator, WA Department of Natural Resources

Jenny shares that within DNR there are seven Community Resilience Coordinators throughout Washington. Jenny is serving as the Community Resilience Coordinator for all of western WA. Her office is near Bellingham. The focus of Jenny's work is to effectively roll out the DNR's 'Wildfire Ready Neighbors' program (WRN). The WRN was rolled out three-years ago on the eastside of the State. WRN builds on the DNR's 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan, the Wildland Fire Protection 10-Year Strategic Plan, and existing efforts including Firewise USA.

Goals of the WFN include: 1) Drives people in high-risk areas to take action to become wildfire ready; 2) Assess land – drives awareness and interest around home landscaping; 3) Builds single replicatable program from work and brand; 4) Continue to strengthen and grow relationships

The WRN program is accessed [www.wildfireready.com](http://www.wildfireready.com) = first step is to sign up, then fill out an informational survey, the end product is a fire ready Plan based on survey inputs. This website will create a Wildfire Ready Plan, opportunity to request a wildfire ready home visit or a forest health consultation from a local wildfire or forest health expert, and links to local resources.

The WRN was launched on the westside Counties in April 2023, specifically in Mason, Thurston and Pierce Counties. Successes, challenges, and lessons learned in these three Counties are being tracked.

WRN was launched on the westside in April, prior to fire season. The results (website participation) are Mason = 95 requests, Thurston = 112 requests, Pierce = 65 requests. There is also an opportunity to request a forest health consultation through the webpage.

Comparison of wildfire related programs: WRN is designed for individuals; Firewise is designed for

neighborhoods; Fire Adaptive Communities is designed for communities. DNR has not yet decided which counties WRN will be launched in next, or when additional property mitigation will occur, and has not finalized plans for additional staffing.

*Discussion*

Richard Martin: King County has much interest in wildfire risk reduction, what should/could King County do in the interim (waiting for WRN to be launched in King County)? Jenny: Eastside Fire and Rescue has a new Wildfire Coordinator, KCD has a Wildfire Resiliency Coordinator, and the Emergency Management Staff at King County are coordinating efforts on this topic. Coordination is being encouraged and supported among partners.

**Presentation: King Conservation District Wildfire Mitigation Cost-Share Program** – Mike Lasecki, Senior Resource Specialist

KCD is active in wildfire related work. History: In 2015 Forest Stewardship work at KCD begins; Wildfire Risk Assessments begin; 2016-2017 KCD receives grant funding to assist with fuel reduction actions and Firewise Plans; 2018-2019 funding made available to continue fuel reduction actions and Firewise Plan work; 2020-2024 new interlocal agreement included dedicated funding and staff for wildfire work. In June 2022 Mike Lasecki assumes responsibility for KCD Wildfire Preparedness Program. The target audience(s) of the program is landowners, and communities. KCD provides: 1) home risk assessments; 2) community wildfire risk assessments; 3) cost-share; and 4) community awareness and education presentations. Priority areas for KCD wildfire related services are Vashon and eastern King County. KCD coordinates with other agencies (Eastside Fire and Rescue, DNR, King County, etc.) to avoid duplication of efforts.

KCD Wildfire Mitigation cost share purpose is to protect homes in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and modeled after other Conservation District cost share programs. Projects are primarily about home hardening areas, specifically the 0-5' zones and the 5-30' zones. The cost share is a binding agreement between KCD and the landowner or the community. KCD Board of Supervisors direct and agree to this cost share program. KCD plans the project and landowner hires the contractor and landowner is responsible for acquiring any permits that may be needed.

Three types of cost share projects: 1) Individual property mitigation projects; 2) Community mitigation projects; 3) Firewise Community supported project. There is a planning and approval process, including a risk assessment. The Wildfire Mitigation cost share program is available for hardscaping, education and outreach, etc.

Challenges: Permitting/permission; connecting with available and quality contractors (KCD cannot make recommendations as a public agency); bureaucracy (set process to follow); staff capacity (one person not 100% dedicated to program); public agency uncertainty

Opportunities: Permitting (city jurisdictions, programmatic permits, code revisions); capacity and progress improvement; transition to a grant application approach within KCD.

*Discussion*

Jesse Reynolds: Will you share a bit more about the Trilogy Landscaping Project (Redmond)? Mike: The project involves the 5' zone surrounding a home, eliminating woody vegetation and replacing with gravel and in the 5-30' zone eliminating ladder fuels and clean-up.

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**Business: Rural Forest Commission Firewise Letter to King County Executive and King County Council**

A letter explaining the importance of managing vegetation within the 100' zone around structures for fire resilience was drafted by RFC subcommittee Steve Horton, Grady Steere, and Jeff Boyce. The final draft of this letter is being considered.

**Motion:** A motion is made to send the RFC Firewise letter to the King County Executive and King County Council. Grady Steere makes the motion, Wyatt Golding seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

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**Presentation: King County Subarea Plan for Snoqualmie Valley and Northeast King County** Jesse Reynolds  
King County Principal Subarea Planner

Jesse shares that a Subarea Plan is like a mini-comprehensive plan for a specific area of King County. The goal of

the subarea plan is to make real, equitable improvements to the quality of life for everyone who lives, works and plays in the area. This Subarea Plan has the same public review period as the King County Comprehensive Plan update. The three focus areas are climate change, affordable housing, and pro-equity proposals. The public release of the Subarea Plan is June 1, with a kickoff event on June 12 in Preston. Subarea Plans have 20-year time horizons. There are chapters on Land use (chapter 4), the Environment (chapter 6) and Parks and Open Space (chapter 7). Jesse shared that there is currently an information gap in the subarea plan on commercial forests/forestry and will be seeking input from Campbell Global to remedy this information gap.

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**Presentation: Squak – Tiger Corridor Forest Stewardship Plan for King County Parks** Noah Barth Green River College Student

Noah shares that this Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) serves as his graduation capstone project. The objectives of the FSP are climate resiliency, recreation promotion, forest connectivity between public lands, and watershed considerations for neighbors and hikers. Noah identified 3 stand types: 1) lowland which would benefit from invasive species control and planting; 2) old growth; and 3) mixed forest which would benefit from a variable retention thinning.

*Discussion*

Paul Fischer shared that King County Parks intends to follow through with the management recommendations in Noah's FSP and he appreciates Noah's efforts.

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**Agency Updates**

-**Trust for Public Lands (TPL)** - Laurie Benson shares that TPL is pursuing a conservation easement at Camp Waskowitz (North Bend) TPL will be using Conservation Futures Funds. TPL is a nonprofit that works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors.

-**KCD** – Brett Anderson shares that a Forest Tour showcase near Soaring Eagle is planned for June 24, and a Cost-share webinar with WSUe is planned for July 11. Currently KCD is focused on a strategic planning process, in preparation for the interlocal agreement in 2024.

-**KC DNRP** – Richard Martin shares that the timing of the RFC Firewise letter is good, relative to the Comprehensive Plan update and other wildfire related work in King County. King County is preparing for a \$100 million dollar budget shortfall in the KC General Fund, which may impact KC Forestry and Agriculture staffing. KC is currently recruiting for an Urban Forester position, the new hire will be focusing on urban tree issues in unincorporated King County. The Urban Forester position will fill Paul Fischer's vacated position (Paul moved fulltime to Parks) and will be funded with Parks levy dollars and not impacted by the General Fund shortfall. A Stewardship and Wildfire Forester position is planned to be advertised the fall (to replace Josi West who moved to KC Parks fulltime); however this position may be impacted by the General Fund shortfall.

-Campbell Global – Grady Steere shares that Campbell Global is actively salvaging burned timber from the 2023 Loc Katrine fire. The burned areas are visible from the North Fork County Road.

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**Adjourn**

**Motion:** A motion is made to adjourn the May 2023 Rural Forest Commission meeting. Grady Steere makes the motion; Jeff Boyce seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

The meeting is adjourned at 11:57