



CITY OF KIRKLAND

City Manager's Office

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www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

MEMORANDUM

To: Dave Ramsay, City Manager

From: Lynn Stokesbary, Assistant City Manager

Date: November 3, 2005

Subject: Special Presentation-King Conservation District

Representatives from the King Conservation District have requested the opportunity to make a presentation to the City Council on November 15. The Conservation District would like to provide a brief background on their agency and proposed special assessment for 2006-2009. I have attached information about the Conservation District for review prior to the Council meeting.



About The King Conservation District

The King Conservation District

Promoting Sustainable Uses of Natural Resources Through Responsible Stewardship

The King Conservation District is a natural resources assistance agency authorized by the State of Washington and guided by the Washington State Conservation Commission. A five member Board of Supervisors is responsible for all District programs and activities.

Since 1949, the KCD has been helping the people of King County manage their natural resources. We educate landowners, schools, scientists, consultants and agencies in how to recognize problem situations and how to avoid creating them. We also provide technical assistance in solving their problems.

We promote conservation through demonstration projects, educational events, providing technical assistance, and, in some cases, providing or pointing the way to funds which may be available for projects. The KCD has no regulatory or enforcement authority. We only work with those who chose to work with us.

All landowners within the District boundaries are entitled to free information and technical assistance for water quality protection, wildlife habitat enhancement, farm management plans, soil and slope stability information, native plant products, manure exchange information, volunteer opportunities, stream restoration/enhancement assistance and many other natural resource topics.

The KCD works hand-in-hand with the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The NRCS provides technical assistance to the KCD, conducts training sessions for KCD personnel, and develops the practices and standards which the KCD uses to develop and implement its projects.

The KCD is funded primarily by a per-parcel assessment fee. Most cities and all of unincorporated King County are members of the King Conservation District. The District receives some funding from the Washington State Conservation Commission. We also receive grants from other state, federal and local sources such as the Urban Resources Partnership, Department of Ecology, the Conservation Commission Research Grant, and King County Block Grant. Although the District is authorized by the state legislature, it is not a state agency and does not receive an ongoing operating budget from the state's General Fund, as most state agencies do.

The King Conservation District Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call, fax, write or stop by our office at:

935 Powell Ave. S.W., Renton, WA. 98055 Phone: (425) 277-5581

Conservation District Supervisor Information Brief



Function of a Conservation District

To take available technical, financial and education resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user for conservation of soil, water, and related resources. Adapted from Dr. Peter Nowak's presentation "The Conservation District Official: Villain or Victim?"

History of Conservation Districts

During the 1930's, the Dust Bowl made the need to conserve natural resources, particularly soil, very clear. Agencies ranging from Land Grant Universities to the Federal Emergency Relief Administration researched and implemented conservation practices throughout the nation. Eventually, the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), was created under the Soil Conservation Act of 1935 to develop and implement soil erosion control programs. Sometimes agencies working with conservation ended up competing with each other. Local leadership was needed to coordinate their efforts and tie them into local conditions and priorities. Because of this, the U.S. Congress developed a model Conservation District law for consideration by state governments.

In 1939, the State Legislature passed an enabling act (RCW 89.08), which established conservation districts in Washington. Conservation districts were to direct programs protecting local renewable natural resources. Washington State now has forty-eight conservation districts in thirty-nine counties.

Conservation Districts' Mission

Conservation districts develop and implement programs to protect and conserve Soil, Water, Prime and Unique Farmland, Rangeland, Woodland, Wildlife, Energy, and other renewable resources on non-federal lands. Districts also stabilize local economies and resolve conflicts in land use. Nationally, conservation districts usually operate under the following general policies:

- Conservation should be led by local citizens.
- The final responsibility for conservation lies with the landowner.
- Landowners have legitimate operating goals.
- Conservation districts are responsive to both landowners and operators, and the community as a whole.
- The best agricultural land should be maintained for agriculture.

Conservation districts are subdivisions of state government, much like school boards. Each district is governed by a Board of five Supervisors. Supervisors are local residents who serve voluntarily without pay. Three are elected by local citizens and two are appointed by the Washington Conservation Commission. Supervisors may come from many different occupations, but by law, three of the five supervisors must be landowners or farm operators.

As a district supervisor, you have a unique niche among agencies managing Washington's natural resources. You serve as the grass roots representative of landowners and the general public in your community, providing leadership and direction to bring volunteer cooperation in natural resource conservation programs. Upon taking the oath of office you agreed to carry out the responsibilities of your position in accordance with the Washington Conservation District Law (RCW Title 89).

Supervisor Role & Responsibilities

- Identify local conservation needs and develop, implement, and evaluate programs to meet them.
- Educate and inform landowners and operators, general public, and local, state and federal legislators on conservation issues and programs.
- Supervise other volunteers and paid staff working with the district; coordinate with cooperating agency personnel.
- Administer the district by delegating tasks through a structure of board officers and members, committees, and others. Raise and budget district funds, and report on activities to the public.
- Coordinate assistance and funding from federal, state, and local government; district associations; and private groups.
- Set policy for staff to implement

Time Required

Your term of office is for three years. You are expected to attend 12 regularly scheduled board meetings per year as well as committee and other special meetings, for an average of 20 days/year.

Benefits

- Satisfaction in seeing conservation practices applied.
- Interaction with others interested in natural resource conservation.
- Input into local, state, and federal conservation programs.
- Training through Washington Conservation Commission and WADE.

Conservation District Purpose

Conservation District Law (Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 89.08 describes the powers and powers and authorities of conservation districts.

- Conduct investigations and research relating to conservation of natural resources;
- Conduct educations and demonstration projects;
- Carry out improvements to conserve natural resources
- Cooperate or enter into agreements with others, including other districts
- Acquire property, donations, gifts and contributions;
- Make available to land occupiers equipment and materials to assist them in conserving natural resources;
- Prepare and keep current a long-range conservation plan and an annual work plan;
- Administer any conservation project or program within the district boundaries;
- Sue and be sued; and
- Hold public hearings, annual meetings, and perform other actions to keep citizens and agencies informed.

For Additional Information - Contacts

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