

# Managing Naturally-Occurring Large Wood in King County Rivers



Joint Basin Technical Committee  
April 4, 2013

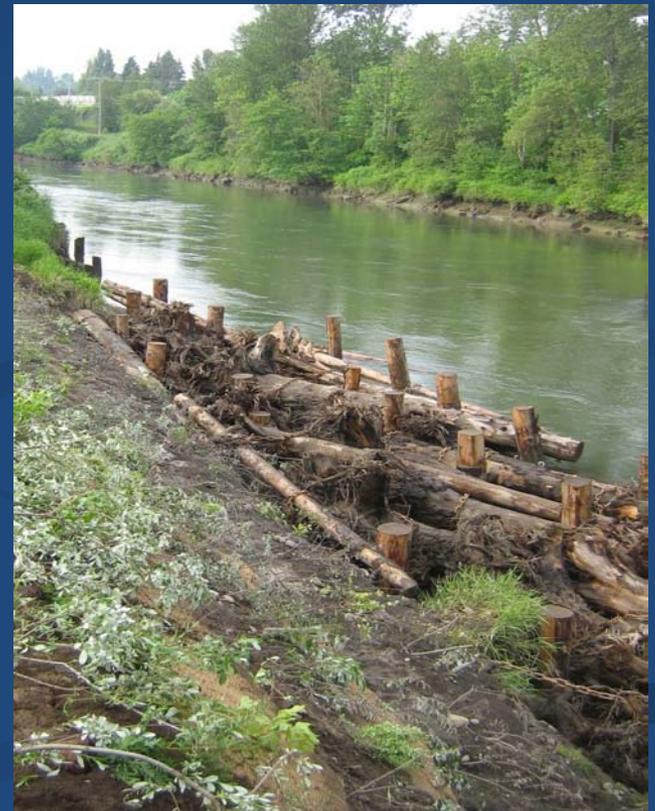
# Presentation Overview

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- River Management Context
- Updated Policies and Procedures for “Managing Natural Wood in Rivers”
- Coordination with Cities

# Evolution of River Management in King County

- Armoring and Straightening
- Bioengineering practices:
  - Guidelines for Bank Stabilization Projects
  - 1993 and 2006 Flood Plans
  - King County Comprehensive Plan
- Present day projects are process-based, dynamic



# King County River Management Goals

- Public Safety
  - Flood Risk Reduction
  - Recreational Use
- Environmental Stewardship
  - Habitat Restoration
  - Water Quality and Open Space
- Manage in partnership with other agencies for multiple benefits



# Timeline for Procedures

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- Early-mid 1990s – King County starts incorporating large wood in projects
- Citizen concerns lead to Boater Safety Advisory Committee
- 2008 Report to King County Council
- 2009 Large Wood Stakeholder Advisory Committee
- 2009 Public Rule for Placed Wood



# Why an update?

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- Status Quo since 2008 :

*Protocol for Responding to Reports of Naturally-Occurring Large Wood in Navigable Rivers and Streams*

- Respond to feedback - Lessons learned;
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, documentation;
- Address procedures for projects where wood is not placed, but expected to recruit.



# Update Process

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- Coordinated with King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO);
- Kept existing procedures generally intact ;
- Reconvened 2009 Large Wood Stakeholder Committee for review;
- Hosted public meeting and comment period;
- Revised procedures approved for use department-wide.

# Key Step: Emergency Response

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- KSCSO receives report from 911;
- Perform initial investigation and response, address emergencies - actions may include:
  - rescue operations,
  - minor wood repositioning,
  - river closure;
- Once stabilized, if safety concerns remain, KCSO contacts WLRD to coordinate follow-up inspections and action strategies.



# Key Step: Site Investigation

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- Field inspection by KCSO and WLRD;
- Assess and document site conditions and risk using *Wood Investigation Report*:
  - Flood risk to infrastructure or built environment;
  - Instream obstacle that may be a hazard to recreational users;
  - Habitat conditions associated with wood, as required for permits and mitigation, if needed.

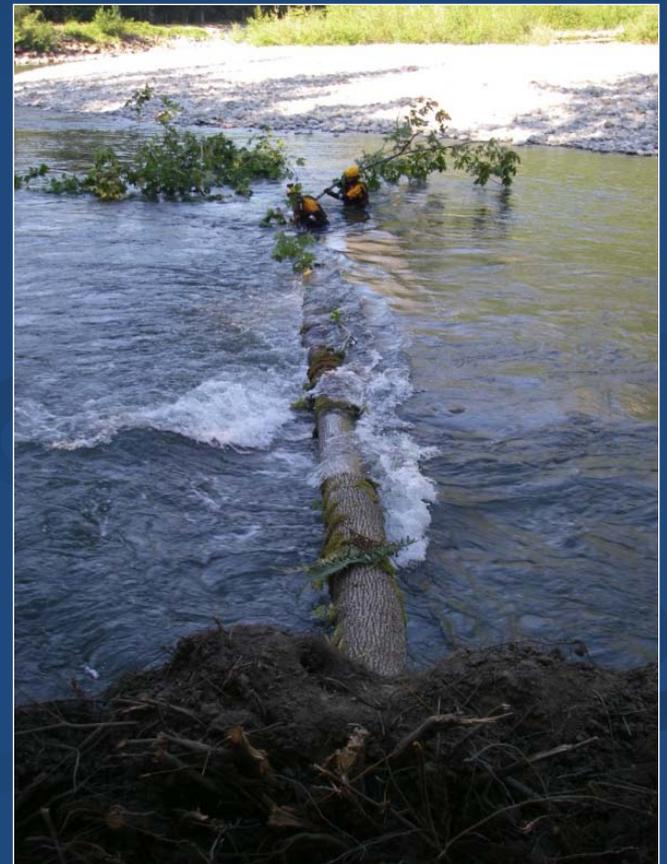


# Wood Investigation Report

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## Safety Considerations:

- Position, alignment and span of wood;
- River conditions;
- Types and seasonality of recreational use;
- Sight lines;
- Ingress and egress



# Key Step: Develop Action Strategy

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WLRD and KCSO coordinate – develop course of action – can include no action:

- Post signage;
- Press release & webpage updates;
- Moving or cutting a portion of the log;
- River closure;
- Logjam removal, relocation and mitigation.



# Key Step: Take Action

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- WLRD and KCSO jointly develop public information - press releases, webpage notices and signage;
- WLRD obtains permits and performs in-water construction work – KCSO provides life-safety assistance as needed;
- Only KCSO has authority to close the river, when necessary, for public safety.

# Outside King County Jurisdiction

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- Citizens instructed to call 911;
- KCSO contacts Communication Center ;
- If wood poses a flood risk, FCD can participate in the investigation and response;
- If wood poses a recreation risk, KCSO can only respond where they have authority.

# Natural Wood in Project Designs

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- Many County projects are designed to mimic natural river systems - wood may naturally lodge within project areas;
- Wood is often beneficial to restoration goals, but may pose risks to people or infrastructure;
- Instream Project Design Checklist - design for safety – anticipate changes in river environment in vicinity of the project.

# Adaptive Management at Project Sites

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- Plan for life of the project;
- Public Safety Management Plans will be developed for project sites to guide long term site management;
- Regular monitoring at project sites;
- Identify problems early, plan in place to guide remedial actions.



# Your Role

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- Make sure your Communication Center is prepared for calls;
- Tell citizens to call 911 for concerns about public safety;
- Cities may contact FCD for help assessing or managing wood posing a flood risk;
- Recommend broad consideration of public safety issues in designing, building, and maintaining river projects;
- Inform watershed teams about projects intended to install or recruit wood;
- Share messages about River Safety in your community.



# Contact Information

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[www.kingcounty.gov/recreation/boating/rivers](http://www.kingcounty.gov/recreation/boating/rivers)

[www.kingcounty.gov/environment/watersheds/general-information/large-wood](http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/watersheds/general-information/large-wood)







King County Sheriff's Office assists construction crews moving a channel spanning log in the Cedar River (2009).