

HANDOUT: MEETING #2
Conservation Categories: Definition, Vision & Values



Conservation Category: Natural Lands

Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality natural communities or high value restoration opportunities • Streams, rivers, wetlands, small lakes, riparian corridors, meadows, forests • Important areas for fish & wildlife habitat • Provide passive recreation opportunities • May provide buffer between land uses • Fee or easement ownership
Values/Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve and restore ecological processes & functions • Protect fish and wildlife habitat and support salmon recovery • Complete natural land corridors • Protect water quality • Connect people with nature through passive recreation
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development or fragmentation within natural corridors • Habitat degradation • Loss of restoration opportunities • Loss of public access opportunities • Potential overuse/overcrowding of existing trailheads and lands
Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected considering best available science (e.g. WRIA Plans, basin studies, etc.) and staff expertise • Preserve intact habitat • Lands along known wildlife and biodiversity corridors • Priority restoration areas • Completion of public land corridors • Passive recreation opportunities
What does “finishing the job” mean?	<p>“Finishing the job” means filling in the missing pieces to complete WRIA plan-prioritized acquisitions; a combination of fee and easement acquisitions to complete protection of riparian corridors; primarily easements on large tracts of intact rural forest in order to encourage environmentally responsible development; acquiring backcountry trail linkages and access opportunities.</p> <p>This work supports a system of large and connected natural areas and watersheds that function naturally and co-exist harmoniously with people.</p>
Acreage	<p>37,500 acres identified with a “natural lands” priority – including multi-objective lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural/Urban: 69% (26,000 acres) • FPD: 21% (8,000 acres) • APD: 10% (3,500 acres)



Conservation Category: Forests

Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working forests, primarily in King County’s Forest Production District Land with large- or small-scale forest production & stewardship opportunity Areas of intact forest or degraded forest with potential for restoration
Values/Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support resource-based economies Provide a barrier against sprawl Provide wildlife habitat Protect water quality, reduce flooding and augment low flows Resilience in response to climate change Support Strategic Climate Action Plan forest land protection goals Help keep our air clean and sequester carbon Places for people to work, play, explore
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subdivision and development within Forest Production District Over the last decade, Puget Sound counties lost 1000-2000 acres of forest land per year¹; development pressure remains in our current economy Decline of resource-based economies may lead to more conversion Even minimal residential development can lead to fragmentation from roads
Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of area in a watershed study or other scientific plan Private inholdings in protected areas Buffer between commercial forestland and residential development Completing a green wall against sprawl Lands along known wildlife corridors Staff expertise Opportunity for trailheads
What does “finishing the job” mean?	<p>“Finishing the job” means filling the final gaps around the edges of existing working forests to build on our past successes (200,000 acres of forest land protected by easement/agreement in the past dozen years) by targeting primarily conservation easement purchases to fill key gaps in the green wall against sprawl; protecting key inholdings that remain unprotected; limiting conversion to residential uses.</p> <p>This work supports a system of large, contiguous, forests that provide ample fish and wildlife habitat, support watershed functions and salmon recovery, support a sustainable forestry industry, help prevent sprawl and provide a place for people to play, explore, and relax.</p>
Acreeage	<p>21,500 acres identified with a “forests” priority – including multi-objective lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural/Urban: 97% (20,750 acres) FPD: 3% (700 acres)

¹ Puget Sound Partnership, Puget Sound Vital Signs website:
http://www.psp.wa.gov/vitalsigns/land_cover_and_development.php (2016).



Conservation Category: Farmland

Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands supporting agricultural production or with potential to do so • Local food production is a key focus • Individual farm parcels, or farm units (collections of parcels under one owner) • In King County’s Agricultural Production District, or in rural areas where there are small-scale farm economies
Values/Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain abundant agricultural land for food production • Keep land affordable for farmers • Contribute to the vitality of the agricultural economy • Access to locally produced food • Support King County’s Local Food Initiative goals for farmland preservation
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming population is aging (in King County the average age is 57)²; land may be sold off with generational changes • Conversion of farmland to residential, non-farming uses (5.2% loss of acres farmed between 2007-2012 in King County)³ • Escalating land costs price out farmers • Need to develop a new generation of farmers with access to land (6% decline in number of beginning farmers 2007-2012 in King County)⁴ • Loss of co-located farms, local economies, and markets – leading to loss of local food production
Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best soils for food production • Unprotected farmland surrounded by protected land • Adjacency to APD boundary • Protecting farm units (assemblages of parcels in a farm under one ownership) • Agricultural community infrastructure needs • Collections of co-located farms in the rural area
What does “finishing the job” mean?	<p>“Finishing the job” means building on past successes (preserving 15,000 acres of farmland) by acquiring easements to protect the most threatened and important farmland; preserving land for farming in both the APD and the rural area; filling the gaps to protect the APD boundary against sprawl.</p> <p>This work supports an increase in the amount of locally grown food and expansion of our agricultural economy.</p>
Acreage	<p>15,200 acres identified with a “farmland” priority – including multi-objective lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural: 31% (4,700 acres) • APD: 69% (10,500 acres)

^{2,3,4} King County Local Food Initiative (2015) p. 14 <http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/local-food/documents/2015-KC-Local-Food-Report.pdf>



Conservation Category: Rivers

Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located along rivers, in both rural and urban areas • Repetitive loss properties • Locations for future flood risk reduction projects
Values/Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect communities from floods • Protect fish and wildlife habitat and support salmon recovery • Promote natural watershed functions • Protect water quality by storing and filtering water • Provide places for people to play and explore
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development in areas at risk of damaging floods • Existing and new development requiring levees and other control structures that limit natural processes and functions
Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified in a flood plan • Identified in a Salmon Recovery Plan • Staff expertise • Repetitive loss areas, projects and facility upgrades to protect communities and infrastructure from floods • Updated river corridor plans in the next few years will confirm existing identified lands and may identify additional lands for capital projects to modify river facilities
What does “finishing the job” mean?	<p>“Finishing the job” means securing lands along our major rivers where repetitive losses have negatively impacted residents; implementing Flood Plan priorities; acquiring land for capital projects to reduce flood risk and provide ancillary habitat benefits.</p> <p>This work supports river corridors where natural processes unfold with minimized flood risk to river valley communities, provide habitat to support fish populations, and support recreational uses.</p>
Acreage	<p>830 acres identified with a “rivers” priority – including multi-objective lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural/urban: 94% (780 acres) • APD: 4% (35 acres) • FPD: 2% (15 acres)



Conservation Category: Regional Trails

Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared use, multi-purpose, trails for non-motorized travel • Provide mobility and recreation opportunities • Developed as paved or soft-surface trails • Regional corridors spanning King County, linking jurisdictions and rural areas
Values/Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand recreation opportunities • Improve mobility throughout region • Enhance environmentally sustainable travel options • Promote active, healthy lifestyles • Provide open space opportunities within and between communities • Improve access to recreation by connecting urban areas with rural lands
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional trails require acquisitions along a relatively narrow linear corridor • Development presents challenges to making key connections in existing trail routes, and establishing new trails along prioritized routes • Accelerating land costs particularly affect urban areas where trails may be located
Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification in Regional Trails Long-Range Plan (Regional Trails Needs Report) • New trail corridor opportunities to enhance the network and provide network connectivity • Facilitating new regional trail interconnections
What does “finishing the job” mean?	<p>“Finishing the job” means completion of our 300-mile trail network, by filling in gaps in existing 175-mile system; adding access opportunities; establishing new trail corridors for planned regional trails.</p> <p>This work supports an expansive, well-connected network of regional trails for recreation, healthy active lifestyles and sustainable mobility.</p>
Acreage	Acreage is not specified. \$75M in estimated acquisition costs.

Finishing the Job

Finishing the job across all conservation categories will ensure the next generation has:

- A landscape more resilient to effects of climate change
- Clean air
- Healthy water
- Sustainable forests
- Biodiversity
- Fresh local food
- Strong resource-based economies
- Access to recreation
- Public land ownership patterns that permanently hold the line against sprawl and uphold growth management goals

