

King County's Science and Technical Support Section: Who We Are and What We Do

By Dave White, Science and Data Management Section Manager

King County's Science and Technical Support Section has a long tradition of providing accurate and useful scientific information. Located within the Water and Lands Resources Division, we are a group of scientists and engineers who supply information supporting the County's Strategic Planning goal of environmental sustainability. To safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment, we gather, analyze, and synthesize information

WHO WE ARE:

A team of water quality scientists, ecologists, hydrologists, biologists, limnologists, toxicologists, hydrogeologists, chemists and oceanographers that assess environmental conditions in King County.

so that it can be used to measure program effectiveness, so they can be adjusted and improved. Our work supports a variety of programs such as stormwater management, wastewater treatment, river and flood management, ecosystem restoration, habitat protection, solid waste, water quality, and the cleanup of Puget Sound. The County also uses our expertise to assist in broader efforts addressing climate change, land use, and countywide comprehensive planning and policy. We also work in collaboration with—and often for—regional partners including cities, state agencies, tribes, Water Resource Inventory Area committees and others.

WHAT WE DO:

- Track long-term status and trends to assess if conditions are getting better or worse.
- Implement studies to assess project effectiveness, find sources of pollution, characterize important environmental features, and support capital projects.
- Provide scientific information to assist in planning efforts, policy decisions, and program design and implementation.
- Make information available to the public—who enjoy and care about our environment.

This newsletter touches on only a small part of the work we do. I encourage you to visit our website www.kingcounty.gov/environment/wlr/sections-programs/science-section.aspx to get a better picture of the breadth of our work. As scientists, our products are information – data sets, analyses, technical advice and reports. Those using the information we generate range from environmental program managers, to other scientists or research organizations, to the general public. We do applied work that must be clearly relevant to users needs, so we value customer service as well as accuracy. For us to be effective, good communication is key: to understand what information users need, as well as to be sure the information we provide is understood and meets those needs.

We are very proud of our role and our accomplishments, and continually look to improve our services to meet increasing and changing needs. Scientific questions and information priorities change over time, and we expect that the provision of timely, accurate and objective scientific information will become more important in the future. Environmental program managers face increasing budget pressures, and need information to help them ensure limited resources are spent where they are most effective. Increasingly, members of the public will demand more information, as our information-savvy culture recognizes the importance of environmental sustainability to their quality of life. We are accountable to our customers and data users to help meet their information needs, and will look to continue to improve in the services we provide. We welcome your suggestions.

Dave White

Dave is the Science and Technical Support section Manager within King County's Water and Land Resources Division. Dave has held several positions in King County over the past 12 years within the Department of Natural Resources and Parks. Dave previously worked as an environmental consultant, as a university researcher, and as a Fisheries Officer for the Peace Corps in West Africa. He has an undergraduate degree in Environmental Science, and master's degrees in Natural Resource Management and Public Policy.



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