



Thurston County Healthy Forests Project

Storm and Surface Water Advisory Board Briefing

March 17, 2022

Overview of Today's Briefing

- Tree Protection Today
 - What does tree protection look like in the County – from code provisions to on the ground efforts?
- Project Scope & Timeline
 - One project--four inter-related planning efforts
- **Feedback requested** on stakeholder and community engagement





Defining Healthy Forests

Forests face numerous stresses from pests and diseases, climate change, development, and destructive wildfires. The goal of this project is to maintain forests that are resilient to these stresses while providing:

- Economic opportunities from the harvest of forest products
- Ecosystem services such as clean water in rivers and streams
- Abundant habitats for fish and wildlife



Current Policies & Codes*

Thurston County Comprehensive Plan contains policies for:

- Protecting rural land uses and preserving natural vegetation
- Improving community resilience to climate change
- Enhancing tree canopy across urban and rural areas

Thurston County Development Code contains provisions for:

- Converting forestlands to non-forestry use
- Open Space, landscaping and planting standards
- Tree retention / replanting in sensitive environmental areas
- Protections for oak woodlands

DDESC Manual contains:

- Best management practices for stormwater management and low impact development
- Incentives for tree preservation during development / redevelopment

* See handout for more detailed information



Snapshot of On the Ground Efforts

County Stewardship Programs

- Stream Team tree planting and forestry workshops
- McLane Creek restoration and maintenance
- Native Plant Salvage Program tree replanting
- Streamside Restoration Grant Program for riparian areas

County Conservation Programs

- Conservation Futures
- Open Space Tax Program for Working Forestlands



Project Scope & Timeline

Kicking off
engagement

Managing Forest Conversions (Spring 2022 – Winter 2022)

Update forest conversion ordinance (TCC Chapter 17.25 and Title 18) to streamline permit processes and make provisions easier to understand and implement

Applied for
DNR Grant

Studying our Forest Canopy (Summer 2022 - Summer 2023)

Complete detailed geospatial analysis to better understand extent and composition of county's forest resources

Planning for a Growing Forest Canopy (Spring 2023 – Winter 2023)

Update county tree planting standards for rural areas (Titles 18 and 20) and review forest conservation programs with aim of growing and restoring healthy forests

Planning for our Urban Forests (Spring 2023 – Summer 2024)

Update urban forest management provisions as part of Joint Code Update projects with Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater



Engagement Approach

- Based on principles of access, equity, and rights
- Provide meaningful and joyful opportunities for community members and stakeholders to openly share thoughts and ideas on maintaining healthy forests in Thurston County.
- Create an education platform for learning more about the region's broad range of forest resources, while celebrating opportunities to actively participate in forestry events



Draft Stakeholder List – Anyone Missing?

- Capitol Land Trust
- Nisqually Land Trust
- Thurston Conservation District
- Thurston County Agricultural Committee
- Thurston County Storm and Surface Water Advisory Board
- Thurston Climate Action Team

- Homebuilders Association
- Olympia Master Builders
- Washington Farm Forestry Association – South Sound Chapter
- Northwest Natural Resource Group
- Council of Western State Foresters
- ???





Healthy Forests Project Storytelling

A Creative Exercise



Next steps and a big thank you!

For questions, contact:

Ashley Arai

Associate Planner

ashley.arai@co.thurstoncounty.wa.us

(360) 545-5476