

May 18, 2026

**OFFICE OF THE HEARING EXAMINER
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE KING
COUNTY COUNCIL FOR CURRENT USE
ASSESSMENT APPLICATION**

SUBJECT: Department of Natural Resources and Parks file no. **E25CT022**
Proposed ordinance no. **2026-0075**
Parcel no. **182203-9007**

HOLLY SIMPKINS AND LEWIS GUENTHER

Application for Current Use Assessment under the Public Benefit Rating System

Location: 22626 111th Avenue SW, Vashon

Applicants: **Holly Simpkins and Lewis Guenther**
22626 111th Avenue SW
Vashon, WA 98070
Telephone: (206) 660-1563
Email: wedaccount@yahoo.com

King County: Department of Natural Resources and Parks
represented by **Bill Bernstein**
201 S. Jackson Street Suite 5601
Seattle, WA 98104
Telephone: (206) 477-4643
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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Department's Recommendation: Approve 3.16 acres for 70% reduction in appraised value.

Examiner's Recommendation: Approve 3.16 acres for 70% reduction in appraised value.

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND:

Per Ch. 20.36 KCC, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) transmitted the subject application along with its Report for Property Enrollment in the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) File No. E25CT022, to the Examiner.

The Examiner conducted a remote public hearing on the application on May 14, 2026. Bill Bernstein, representing DNRP, presented the application and DNRP's recommendation. Applicant Lewis Guenther also participated.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

1. Except as modified herein, the facts set forth in DNRP's staff report and testimony at the May 14, 2026, public hearing are correct and incorporated here by reference. We will provide copies of this report and DNRP's staff report to the King County Council for final action.
2. The property at issue is at 22626 111th Avenue SW, Vashon, Parcel No. 182203-9007, owned by the Applicants Holly Simpkins and Lewis Guenther.
3. The Applicants timely filed an application with King County for current use assessment of the above identified property under the PBRs to begin in 2026.
4. Timely and proper legal notice of the public hearing on the application was provided.
5. A list of the PBRs Open Space Resource categories identified by DNRP as relevant to the property are provided below. Categories that DNRP determined were eligible (or eligible with contingencies) for credit are assigned the applicable number of points. In this case DNRP also recommended credit for a "bonus" category as indicated below.

PBRs categories:	Aquifer protection area	5
	Buffer to public or current use classified land	3
	Significant wildlife or fish habitat	5
	<u>Bonus: Resource restoration</u>	<u>5*</u>
	Total points awarded	18

The DNRP-recommended score of 18 points results in a 70% reduction in the appraised value of the enrolled portion of the property. Each category where points are recommended is discussed below.

6. **Aquifer protection area – 5 points.** The entire property is located in an area designated as a critical aquifer recharge area (CARA 3). The natively forested area is greater than one acre in size and meets the minimum required acreage for this category.
7. **Buffer to public or current use classified land – 3 points.** The property is abutting land participating in the PBRs program to the north (parcel 182203-9258). The enrolling

open space area is providing a buffer of native vegetation of more than fifty feet to this adjacent land, which exceeds the category's requirement.

8. **Significant wildlife or salmonid habitat – 5 points.** A staff site visit established that the property valuable foraging and nesting habitat for the pileated woodpecker, which is identified in King County's Comprehensive Plan as a Species of Local Importance (E-328(e)). Award of this category is consistent with habitat as defined by KCC 20.36.100.B.15.a(1).
9. **Bonus: Resource restoration:** The owners intend to restore an area of their forest heavily impacted by Himalayan Blackberry (approximately 0.15 acres outlined in green on the attached map). The owners have provided a resource restoration plan that has been approved by PBRS staff and therefore meet the criteria for award of this category.
10. **Contingencies, Conditions, and Requirements.**

The Examiner incorporates all conditions and requirements identified in the PBRS Staff Report. Ex. 1.
11. **Enrollment Acreage.** The Applicants requested 3.14 acres and DNRP recommends 3.16 acres of the subject property be enrolled in the PBRS program. (Enrollment acreage is the entire parcel less the excluded area, as calculated by DNRP. In the event the County Assessor's official parcel size is revised, the PBRS acreage shall be administratively adjusted to reflect that change.)
12. Approval of 18 points and a 70% reduction in the appraised value of the enrolled portion of the property is consistent with Ch. 20.36 KCC and with the purposes and intent of King County to maintain, preserve, conserve, and otherwise continue in existence adequate open space lands and to assure the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty for the economic and social well-being of King County and its citizens.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE credit for the above listed PBRS open space categories on 3.16 acres of parcel 182203-9007 with a 70% reduction in the appraised value of the enrolled portion of the property. Approval should be subject to any conditions and requirements listed herein or incorporated from the DNRP staff report.

DATED May 18, 2026.



Devon Shannon
Hearing Examiner

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

A party may appeal an Examiner report and recommendation by following the steps described in KCC 20.22.230. By **4:30 p.m.** on ***June 11, 2026***, an electronic appeal statement must be sent to Clerk.Council@kingcounty.gov, to hearingexaminer@kingcounty.gov, and to the party email addresses on the front page of this report and recommendation. Please consult KCC 20.22.230 for the exact filing requirements.

If a party fails to timely file an appeal, the Council does not have jurisdiction to consider that appeal. Conversely, if the appeal requirements of KCC 20.22.230 are met, the Examiner will notify parties and interested persons and will provide information about next steps in the appeal process.

MINUTES OF THE MAY 14, 2026, HEARING ON THE APPLICATION OF HOLLY SIMPKINS AND LEWIS GUENTHER, FILE NO. E25CT022

Devon Shannon was the Hearing Examiner in this matter. A verbatim recording of the hearing is available in the Hearing Examiner's Office.

The following exhibits were offered by DNRP and entered into the record:

Exhibit no. 1	DNRP staff report
Exhibit no. 2	<i>Reserved for future submission of the affidavit of hearing publication</i>
Exhibit no. 3	Legal notice and introductory ordinance to the King County Council
Exhibit no. 4	Arcview/orthophotograph and aerial map
Exhibit no. 5	Application signed and notarized
Exhibit no. 6	Resource Restoration Plan