

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. **E25CT023**
Proposed ordinance no. **2026-0076**
Parcel no. **252302-9019**

COURTNEY SECOR

Application for Current Use Assessment under the Public Benefit Rating System

Location: 12824 SW Cove Road, Vashon

Applicants: **Courtney Secor**
12824 SW Cove Road
Vashon, WA 98070
Telephone: (206) 369-0682
Email: redsquirel@gmail.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
Email: bill.bernstein@kingcounty.gov

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Department's Recommendation: Approve 9.13 acres for 70% reduction in appraised value, with conditional approval for an additional 1.65 acres with an 80% reduction.

Examiner's Recommendation: Approve 9.13 acres for 70% reduction in appraised value, with conditional approval for an additional 1.65 acres with an 80% reduction.

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. E25CT023, 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 Courtney Secor did not participate.

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 12824 SW Cove Road, Vashon, Parcel No. 252302-9019, owned by the Applicant Courtney Secor.
3. The Applicant 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.

PBRs categories:	Aquifer protection area	5
	Buffer to public or current use classified land	3
	Farm and agricultural conservation land	*
	Forest stewardship land	*
	Rural stewardship land	5
	Significant wildlife or fish habitat	5
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 the entire property is in an area designated as a critical aquifer recharge area (CARA 1 and 2). The natively forested area is greater than one acre in size and exceeds 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 east (parcel 252302-9119). 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. **Farm and agricultural conservation land - 5 points.** The property consists of 1.65 acres of traditional farmland. To be eligible to receive credit for this category and enroll this portion of the property in PBRS an approved farm management plan must be implemented.
9. **Forest stewardship land – 5 points.** The property contains more than nine acres of contiguous forest, and the owners would like to obtain and implement a forest stewardship plan. However, credit for this category cannot be recommended because this plan has not yet been submitted and approved by county forestry staff.
10. **Rural open space – 5 points.** The property is in the rural area and contains more than nine acres of contiguous forested open space, which is more than the category's required five acre minimum.
11. **Significant wildlife or salmonid habitat – 5 points.** A staff site visit established that the property contains 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).
12. **Contingencies, Conditions, and Requirements.**
 - A. An additional 5 points may be awarded administratively for the farm and agricultural conservation land, and forest stewardship land categories, for a total additional 10 points.
 - B. Qualification for the farm and agricultural conservation land category is contingent on submittal of a King Conservation District-approved farm management plan by December 31, 2026. Award of credit under this category will increase the point total by 5 points, with no change to the current use valuation, but would increase the total enrolled acreage to 10.78.
 - C. Qualification for the forest stewardship land category is contingent on submittal of a forest stewardship plan approved by county forestry staff by December 31, 2026. Award of credit under this category will increase the point total by 5 points, with no change to the current use valuation unless the farm and agricultural conservation category is also awarded.
 - D. If both categories are awarded credit, the total points will increase to 28 for an 80% reduction in the appraised value of the enrolled portion of the property.
 - E. The Examiner incorporates all conditions and requirements identified in the PBRS Staff Report. Ex. 1.

13. **Enrollment Acreage.** DNRP recommends 9.13 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.) This can be administratively adjusted to 10.78 acres with approval of a farm management plan under the above conditions.
14. Approval of 18 points and a 70% reduction in the appraised value of the enrolled portion of the property, and conditional approval of up to 10 additional points for an 80% 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:

1. APPROVE credit for the above listed PBRS open space categories on 9.13 acres of parcel 252302-9019 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.
2. CONDITIONALLY APPROVE additional credit for up to 10 points, subject to timely submittal of a King County Conservation District approved farm management plan and/or forest stewardship plan by December 31, 2026. Award of credit under the farm management category will increase the enrolled acreage to 10.78 acres. Only with award of both conditional categories will the appraised value of the enrolled portion of the property be further reduced to 80%.

DATED May 18, 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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 COURTNEY SECOR, FILE NO. E25CT023

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