

**KING COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND PARKS  
WATER AND LAND RESOURCES DIVISION**

**Report to the King County Hearing Examiner for Property  
Enrollment in the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs)**

**April 26, 2018 – Public Hearing**

**APPLICANT: Tina Mawing**

**File No. E17CT051**

**A. GENERAL INFORMATION:**

1. Owner: Tina Mawing  
483 Paulas Circle  
Kearneysville, WV 25430
2. Property location: 8829 SW 198th Street  
Vashon, WA 98070
3. Zoning: RA10SO
4. STR: NE-05-22-03
5. PBRs categories requested by applicants and *suggested by program staff*:

**Open space resources**

*\*Aquifer protection area*

Rural stewardship land

*\*Significant wildlife and salmonid habitat*

Surface water quality buffer

Urban open space

*\*\*Watershed protection area*

**Bonus category**

*\*\*Resource restoration*

NOTE: \*Staff recommends credit be awarded for these PBRs categories. \*\*Award of these categories is also possible, but will be dependent upon specific category requirements being met (see resource category discussion under Section E beginning on page 6).

6. Parcel: 249560-0076  
 Total acreage: 2.37  
 Requested PBRs: non-specified  
 Home site/excluded area: 0.84  
**Recommended PBRs: 1.53\***

NOTE: The portion recommended for enrollment in PBRs is the entire property less the excluded area as measured. The attached 2017 aerial photo outlines the parcel in yellow and the areas proposed to be excluded from PBRs in blue. In the event the Assessor’s official parcel size is revised, PBRs acreage should be administratively adjusted to reflect that change.

**\*If an approved resource restoration plan is submitted for the 0.07 acres (outlined in green on the attached map), then the enrolling acreage would increase from 1.53 acres to 1.60 acres.**

**B. FACTS:**

1. Zoning in the vicinity: Properties in the vicinity are zoned RA2.5, RA2.5SO, RA10, and RA10SO.
2. Development of the subject property and resource characteristics of open space area: The property has a single family residence, septic drainfield, driveway, gravel parking, and lawn. The open space is mostly a steep ravine with a type F stream at the bottom and coniferous forest with native understory along the banks. However, areas of the property are impacted by a variety of noxious weeds such as ivy, Himalayan blackberry, and holly which the owner plans to address in a resource restoration plan. The 0.07 acres outlined in green within the southeast corner of the property must also be revegetated with native species in order for this area to be enrolled in PBRs.
3. Site use: The property is used as a single family residence.
4. Access: The property is accessed from SW 198th Street.
5. Appraised value for 2018 (Based on Assessor’s information dated 03/14/2018):

<u>Parcel #249560-0076</u>	<u>Land</u>	<u>Improvements</u>	<u>Total</u>
Assessed value	<b>\$155,000.00</b>	\$273,000.00	\$428,000.00
Tax applied	<b>\$1,915.10</b>	\$3,373.06	\$5,288.16

NOTE: Participation in PBRs reduces the appraised land value for the portion of the property enrolled resulting in a lower taxable value.

## **C. REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED BY KING COUNTY CODE (KCC):**

### **KCC 20.36.010 Purpose and intent.**

It is in the best interest of the county to maintain, preserve, conserve and otherwise continue in existence adequate open space lands for the production of food, fiber and forest crops, and to assure the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty for the economic and social well-being of the county and its citizens.

It is the intent of this chapter to implement RCW Chapter 84.34, as amended, by establishing procedures, rules and fees for the consideration of applications for public benefit rating system assessed valuation on "open space land" and for current use assessment on "farm and agricultural land" and "timber land" as those lands are defined in RCW 84.34.020. The provisions of RCW chapter 84.34, and the regulations adopted thereunder shall govern the matters not expressly covered in this chapter.

### **KCC 20.36.100 Public benefit rating system for open space land – definitions and eligibility.**

- A. To be eligible for open space classification under the public benefit rating system, property must contain one or more qualifying open space resources and have at least five points as determined under this section. The department will review each application and recommend award of credit for current use of property that is the subject of the application. In making such recommendation, the department will utilize the point system described in section B. and C. below.
- B. The following open space resources are each eligible for the points indicated:
1. Public recreation area – five points
  2. Aquifer protection area – five points
  3. Buffer to public or current use classified land – three points
  4. Equestrian-pedestrian-bicycle trail linkage – thirty-five points
  5. Active trail linkage – fifteen or twenty-five points
  6. Farm and agricultural conservation land – five points
  7. Forest stewardship land – five points
  8. Historic landmark or archaeological site: buffer to a designated site – three points
  9. Historic landmark or archaeological site: designated site – five points
  10. Historic landmark or archaeological site: eligible site – three points
  11. Rural open space – five points
  12. Rural stewardship land – five points
  13. Scenic resource, viewpoint, or view corridor – five points
  14. Significant plant or ecological site – five points
  15. Significant wildlife or salmonid habitat – five points
  16. Special animal site – three points
  17. Surface water quality buffer – five points
  18. Urban open space – five points
  19. Watershed protection area – five points

- C. Property qualifying for an open space category in subsection B. of this section may receive credit for additional points as follows:
1. Resource restoration - five points
  2. Additional surface water quality buffer - three or five points
  3. Contiguous parcels under separate ownership - two points
  4. Conservation easement of historic easement – fifteen points
  5. Public access - points dependent on level of access
    - a. Unlimited public access - five points
    - b. Limited public access - sensitive areas - five points
    - c. Environmental education access – three points
    - d. Seasonal limited public access - three points
    - e. None or members only – zero points
  6. Easement and access – thirty-five points

**D. 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES AND TEXT:**

**E-101** In addition to its regulatory authority, King County should use incentives to protect and restore the natural environment whenever practicable. Incentives shall be monitored and periodically reviewed to determine their effectiveness in terms of protecting natural resources.

NOTE: Monitoring of participating lands is the responsibility of both department PBRs staff and the landowner. This issue is addressed in the Resource Information document (page 4) and detailed below in Recommendation #B9.

**E-112a** The protection of lands where development would pose hazards to health, property, important ecological functions or environmental quality shall be achieved through acquisition, enhancement, incentive programs and appropriate regulations. The following critical areas are particularly susceptible and shall be protected in King County:

- a. Floodways of 100-year floodplains;
- b. Slopes with a grade of 40% or more or landslide hazards that cannot be mitigated;
- c. Wetlands and their protective buffers;
- d. Aquatic areas, including streams, lakes, marine shorelines and their protective buffers;
- e. Channel migration hazard areas;
- f. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas;
- g. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas; and
- h. Volcanic hazard areas.

**E-421** Terrestrial and aquatic habitats should be conserved and enhanced to protect and improve conditions for fish and wildlife.

NOTE: PBRS is an incentive program provided to encourage voluntary protection of open space resources and maintain high quality resource lands.

**E-429** King County should provide incentives for private landowners who are seeking to remove invasive plants and noxious weeds and replace them with native plants, such as providing technical assistance or access to appropriate native plants.

NOTE: Participation in PBRS requires landowners address invasive plant and noxious weed control and removal within enrolled portions of a property. Replacement with native vegetation is also encouraged via the implementation of approved forest stewardship, rural stewardship or resource restoration plans.

**E-443** King County should promote voluntary wildlife habitat enhancement projects by private individuals and businesses through educational, active stewardship, and incentive programs.

**E-476** King County should identify upland areas of native vegetation that connect wetlands to upland habitats and that connect upland habitats to each other. The county should seek protection of these areas through acquisition, stewardship plans, and incentive programs such as the Public Benefit Rating System and the Transfer of Development Rights Program.

**E-504** King County should protect native plant communities by encouraging management and control of nonnative invasive plants, including aquatic plants. Environmentally sound methods of vegetation control should be used to control noxious weeds.

NOTE: Lands participating in PBRS provide valuable resource protection and promote the preservation or enhancement of native vegetation. Addressing nonnative vegetation (invasive plant species), through control and eradication is a PBRS requirement.

**E-449** King County shall promote retention of forest cover and significant trees using a mix of regulations, incentives, and technical assistance.

**R-605** Forestry and agriculture best management practices are encouraged because of their multiple benefits, including natural resource preservation and protection.

NOTE: The implementation of an approved forest stewardship, farm management or rural stewardship plan benefits natural resources, such as wildlife habitat, stream buffers and groundwater protection, as well as fosters the preservation of sustainable resources.

## E. PBRs CATEGORIES REQUESTED and DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Open space resources

- Aquifer protection area  
Although credit for this category was not requested, 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. Credit for this category is recommended.
- Rural stewardship land  
In order to be awarded credit for this category, a rural stewardship plan must be provided and approved. Because credit for this category cannot overlap with the resource restoration category, receipt of a plan is not realistic. Credit for this category is not recommended.
- Significant wildlife and salmonid habitat  
Although credit for this category was not requested, the property contains habitat for numerous wildlife species, including foraging and nesting habitat for the pileated woodpecker, which is listed as a candidate species of concern by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Upon conducting a site visit, program staff observed evidence of pileated woodpecker activity and determined areas of the forest on the property is of sufficient age and diversity to support the species regular use of the property. Award of this category is consistent with habitat as defined by KCC 20.36.100, section B.15.a(1). Credit for this category is recommended.
- Surface water quality buffer  
In order to be eligible for this category, the enrolling land must be providing a qualifying buffer of native vegetation to a lake, pond, stream, wetland or shoreline within the enrolling portion of a property. The property does contain what is likely a type F stream. As required by county code (KCC 21A.24.355.A), the buffer width required for Type F waters is 165 feet. In order to be eligible for this category, the participating land must provide a buffer greater than 1.5 times that required or 247.50 feet in this case. The landowner is providing 165 feet west of the stream which is less than 1.5 times required. Credit for this category cannot be recommended.
- Urban open space  
To be eligible for this category the property must be located within the urban growth area, which it is not. Credit for this category cannot be recommended.
- Watershed protection area  
The portion of property currently eligible for enrollment is just slightly less than 65% of the total property. Although credit for this category was not requested, if the 0.07 acres in the southeast corner of the property is restored and the weeds are addressed according to a resource restoration plan, then this would increase the enrolling acreage to 1.60 acres which is 67% native forest cover. At this time, credit for this category cannot be recommended because less than 65% of the property is in native forest cover. **If an approved resource restoration plan is provided by the established deadline and the 0.07 acre in the southeast corner of the property is restored, then credit could be awarded administratively.**

**Bonus category**

- Resource restoration

Although credit for this category was not requested, the property contains areas that could benefit from a restoration plan as there are a variety of noxious weeds such as ivy, Himalayan blackberry, and holly. Additionally, there is 0.07 acres (light green on attached map (SE corner of the property) appears to be maintained by a neighbor. In order to qualify for this category and enroll the portion of the property outlined in green in PBRS, a resource restoration plan must be provided by the owners, approved by the department, and implemented. At this time, because a plan has not been provided, credit for this category cannot be awarded. However, if a plan is provided to the department by **October 31, 2018**, then credit for this category could be awarded administratively.

Award of this category may allow restoration activities to occur in the participating open space area. It is the landowner’s responsibility to apply for and receive the necessary approvals from the applicable state and local governmental agencies for activities that may require a permit or approval, such as clearing and grading. It should be noted that this planting activity must be completed within a three-year period.

NOTE: It is important to note that enrollment in the PBRS program requires the control and removal of invasive plant species. This issue is addressed in the Resource Information document (page 3) and below in Recommendation #B7.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**A. CONCLUSIONS:**

1. Approval of the subject request would be consistent with the specific purpose and intent of KCC 20.36.010.
2. Approval of the subject request would be consistent with policy E-101 of the King County Comprehensive Plan.
3. Of the points recommended, the subject request meets the mandatory criteria of KCC 20.36.100 as indicated:

**Open space resources**

- Aquifer protection 5
- Rural stewardship land 0
- Significant wildlife and salmonid habitat 5
- Surface water quality buffer 0
- Urban open space 0
- Watershed protection area \*\*

**Bonus category**

- Resource restoration \*

**TOTAL 10 points**

NOTE: \*If credit is awarded for the resource restoration category, then the point total would increase to 15 and the reduction in land assessed value for the portion enrolled would increase 60%. If the restoration plan also addresses the 0.07 acres outlined in green, the acreage eligible to participate in the PBRs program would increase to 1.60 acres.

\*\*If the 0.07 acres are enrolled via the implementation of a resource restoration plan, credit for this category would also be recommended. The point total would then further increase to 20 and the reduction in land assessed value for the portion enrolled would increase to 70%.

**PUBLIC BENEFIT RATING**

For the purpose of taxation, 10 points result in 50% of assessed value and a 50% reduction in taxable value for the portion of land enrolled.

**B. RECOMMENDATION:**

APPROVE the request for current use taxation "Open space" classification with a Public Benefit Rating of 10 points, subject to the following requirements:

**Requirements for Property Enrolled in the  
Public Benefit Rating System Current Use Taxation Program**

1. Compliance with these requirements is necessary to continue to receive the tax benefits from the King County Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) current use taxation program for the property enrolled in the program (Property). Failure to abide by these requirements can result in removal of current use designation and subject the property owner (Owner) to the penalty, tax, and interest provisions of RCW 84.34 and assessment at true and fair value. The County Assessor and the King County Rural and Regional Services Section or its successor may re-evaluate the Property to determine whether removal of the open space designation is appropriate. Removal shall follow the process in RCW 84.34.108.
2. Revisions to these requirements may only occur upon mutual written approval of the Owner and granting authority. These conditions shall apply so long as the Property retains its open space designation. If a conservation easement acceptable to and approved by King County is granted by the Owner or the Owner's successors in interest to the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, King County or a grantee approved by King County, these requirements may be superseded by the terms of such easement, upon written approval by King County.
3. The open space classification for this Property will continue so long as it meets the open space purposes for which it was initially approved. Classification as open space will be

removed upon a determination by King County that the Property no longer meets the open space purposes for which it was initially approved. A change in circumstances which diminishes the extent of public benefit from that approved by the King County Council in the open space taxation agreement will be cause for removal of the current use assessment classification. It is the Owner's responsibility to notify the Assessor and the King County Rural and Regional Services Section or its successor of a change in circumstance with regard to the Property.

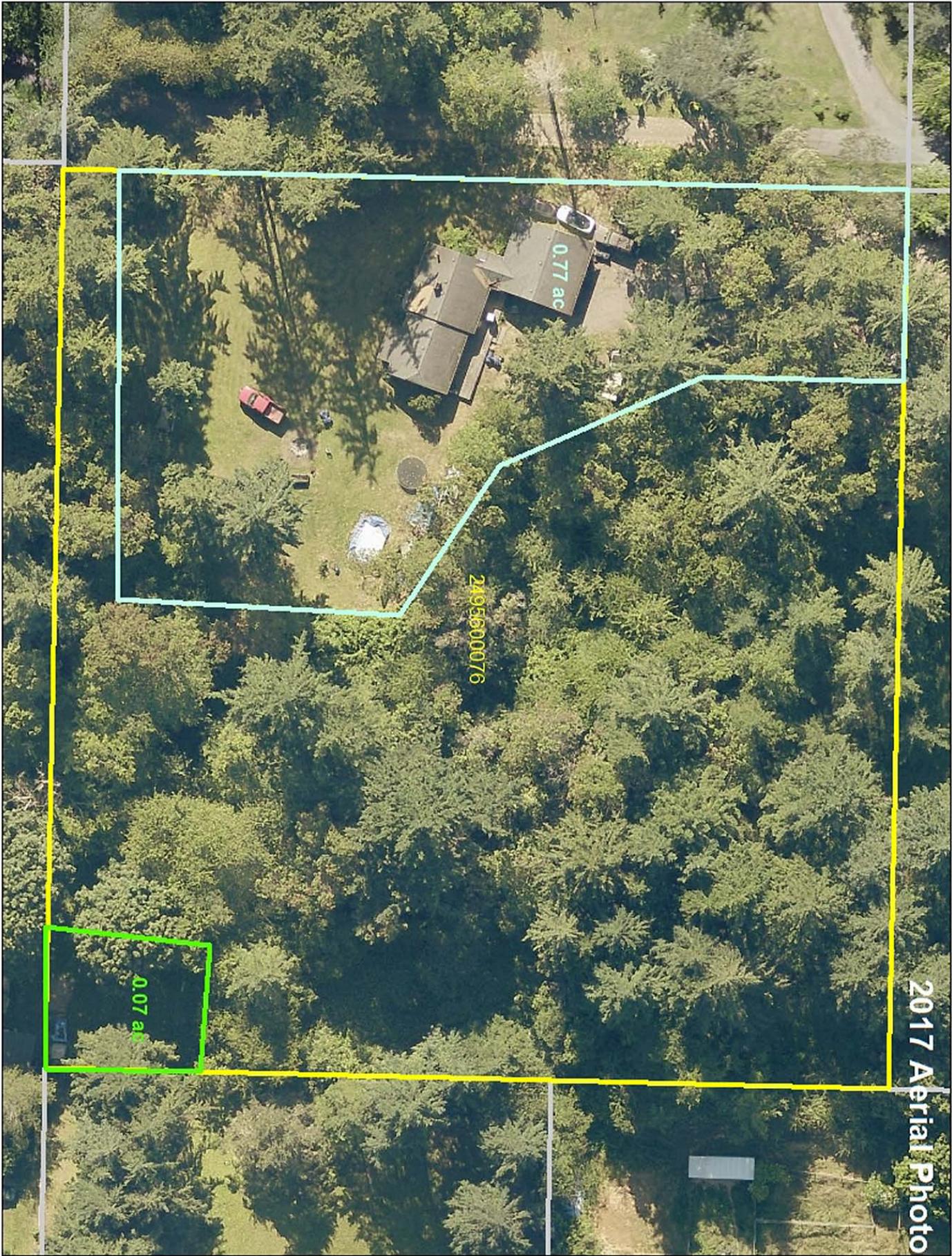
4. When a portion of the open space Property is withdrawn or removed from the program, the King County Rural and Regional Services Section or its successor and the Assessor shall re-evaluate the remaining Property to determine whether it may continue to qualify under the program. If the remaining portion meets the criteria for priority resources, it may continue under current use taxation.
5. Except as provided for in sections 6, 7 and 9 below, no alteration of the open space land or resources shall occur without prior approval by the King County Rural and Regional Services Section or its successor. **Any unapproved alteration may constitute a departure from an approved open space use and be deemed a change of use, and subject the Property to the additional tax, interest, and penalty provisions of RCW 84.34.080.** "Alteration" means any human-induced action that adversely impacts the existing condition of the open space Property or resources including but not limited to the following: *(Walking, horseback riding, passive recreation or actions taken in conjunction with a resource restoration plan, or other similar approved activities are permitted.)*
  - a. erecting structures;
  - b. grading;
  - c. filling;
  - d. dredging;
  - e. channelizing;
  - f. modifying land or hydrology for surface water management purposes;
  - g. cutting, pruning, limbing or topping, clearing, planting, introducing, relocating or removing vegetation, however, selective cutting may be permitted for firewood;
  - h. applying herbicides or pesticides or any hazardous or toxic substance;
  - i. discharging pollutants excepting stormwater;
  - j. paving, construction, application of gravel;
  - k. storing of equipment, household supplies, play equipment, or compost;
  - l. engaging in any other activity that adversely impacts the existing vegetation, hydrology, wildlife, wildlife habitat, or other open space resources.
6. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 5 trees posing a hazard to structures or major roads may be removed. Any trees removed must be replaced.
7. If an area of the Property becomes or has become infested with noxious weeds, the Owner may be required to submit a control and enhancement plan to the King County Rural and Regional Services Section or its successor in order to remove such weeds. If an area of the Property becomes or has become invaded by non-native species, the

Owner may be required to submit, or may voluntarily submit, an enhancement plan to the King County Rural and Regional Services Section or its successor, in order to replace such species with native species or other appropriate vegetation.

8. There shall be no motorized vehicle driving or parking allowed on the open space Property, except for the purpose of resource restoration.
8. Grazing of livestock is prohibited on the open space Property.
9. Resource restoration must be implemented in a timely manner in accordance with any Resource Restoration Plan that applies to the Property and that has been approved by the PBRS Staff. During plan implementation and for the first 5 years of enrollment, the Owner must submit a yearly monitoring report to PBRS Staff describing the progress and success of the restoration, including photographs. An environmental consultant need not prepare the report.
10. Enrollment in PBRS *does not* exempt the Owner from obtaining any required permit or approval for activity or use on the Property.

**TRANSMITTED** to the parties listed hereafter:

Office of the King County Hearing Examiner  
Tina Mawing, applicant  
Debra Clark, King County Department of Assessments  
Liz Clark, King Conservation District



2017 Aerial Photo