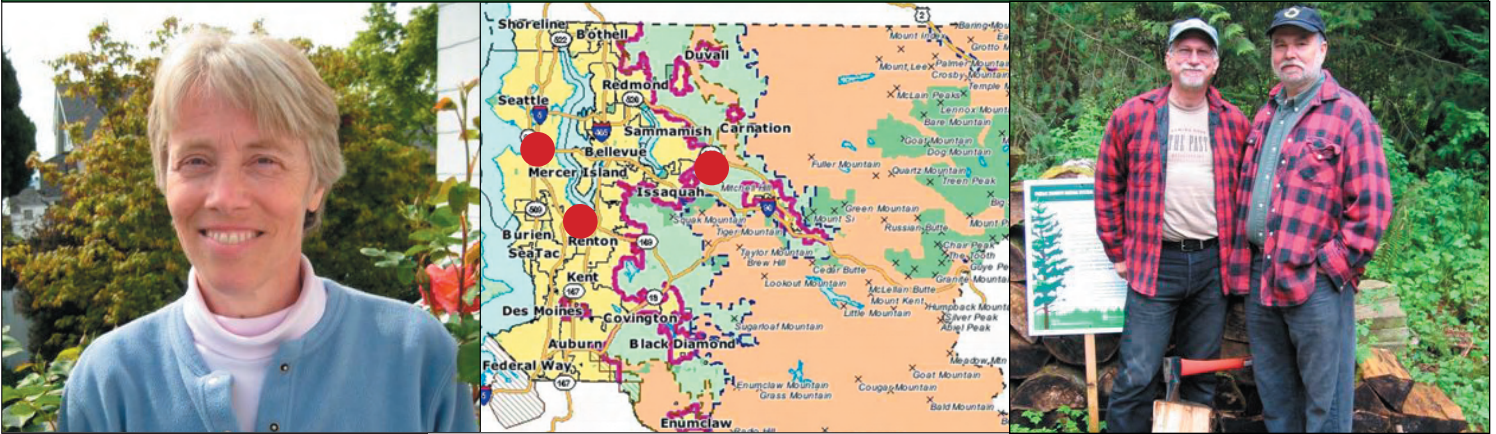


URBAN RURAL CONNECTIONS – A WHOLE KING COUNTY



PBRs, Small Forest Land Owners and WSU Ext

Sally King, King County Tax Incentive Programs

Sally King lives in northwest Seattle, right next to Puget Sound. She can smell the salt air and hear the sea lions and seagulls. While she loves living by the sea, she also loves traveling throughout rural King County, getting to know the individuals who steward the forests and farms there preserving natural treasures for everyone.

Sally works for King County on a property tax incentive program in the Office of Rural and Resource Programs called the Public Benefit Rating System. The Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) and the Timber Land programs provide incentives to encourage landowners to voluntarily conserve and protect land resources, open space and timber. In return for preserving and managing resources, the land is assessed at a value consistent with its "current use" offering reductions between 50 and 90% for the portion of the land participating in the program. Over 1,175 landowners in King County are presently participating in these two programs.

The PBRs program is for property qualifying with one or more defined natural resources including native forest, stream buffers, ground water protection areas, threatened or endangered wildlife, and historic property. The Timber Land program is for property containing between five to 20 acres of forestland to be devoted to the growth and harvest of timber. To enroll in the Timber Land program, the owner must have an approved and implemented forest stewardship plan.

During the last few years, Sally has had the opportunity to work with landowners in areas surrounding Grand Ridge Park and has enrolled over 100 acres in PBRs. During 2007 and 2008, over 25 landowners enrolled in PBRs to protect important forested headwaters of Issaquah North Fork and the important salmon-spawning Canyon Creek.

John Chaney & Bruce Bigley, Fall City

John Chaney and Bruce Bigley live on five acres of forested land. They've come to enjoy the quiet solitude of rural life. They feel close enough to Seattle to shop, to enjoy a meal out, have a night at the Seattle Opera, or visit to Seattle Art Museum. Yet they can come home to enjoy the quiet of their cedar forest, glimpse deer and the occasional bear, and enjoy the sound of Canyon Creek and the beauty of these woods. Woods that reinforce childhood memories and offer a contrast to their many years of urban living.

Logged almost a hundred years ago, their land was not replanted and has grown a natural diversity of fir, cedar and deciduous hardwoods. This rare biodiversity is something they want to preserve.

In 2006, they enrolled the eligible portion of their property in the PBRs program. They are now saving roughly 80% of property taxes on that land. They developed a forest plan with the help of Amy Grotta, the WSU Extension forestry educator who conducts the Forest Stewardship Coached Planning course locally.

They learned increased appreciation for the forest as a changing thing, that the best way to preserve it is to manage it, since left to itself, it will change in unplanned and possibly less healthy or desirable ways.

As a result of taking the course, they decided to harvest the alder on their property not by cutting them up for firewood, but by responsibly logging them. They are leaving intact the stands of Cedar and Douglas Fir that have centuries more to live.

