



PRKC Vision and Charter
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 Questions to info@PRKC.org

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Executive Summary

Partnership for Rural King County (PRKC) is a grassroots consortium of neighborhood residents, community associations, non-profits, outdoor user groups and educational agencies dedicated to conservation and support of rural communities and surrounding lands in eastern King County located in Washington State.

Our geographic area of focus is the rural unincorporated areas and surrounding incorporated communities of the Snoqualmie Valley including, but not limited to Issaquah, Grand Ridge, Preston, Fall City, Sammamish, North Bend, Snoqualmie, Carnation, Redmond and Duvall.

PRKC supports communities and community members by promoting balance between community, economy and the environment. We facilitate community and organizational networking, planning and resource sharing. PRKC Shared Values dictate the PRKC Priorities and center around sustainability and local support for:

- Working Forest Land
- Farms
- Outdoor Recreation
- Private Landowner Stewardship

In support of the PRKC Priorities, we seek to:

- *enable private landowners, small farmers and communities* to play a part in ensuring the sustainability of our region
- work with private and public organizations on *conservation projects*
- inspire communities to *create Visions and participate in Growth Management policy decisions*
- *identify and facilitate win-win partnerships* among stakeholders around Shared Values.

This Document

This document, the PRKC Charter, outlines our commitment to excellence, transparency and accountability. The purpose of the Charter is to:

- identify and define Shared Values and outline the PRKC Priorities
- describe how we work with communities and individuals
- outline our organizational structure and governance procedures
- encourage communication with stakeholders.

To demonstrate and build on these commitments, we will work to consistently improve the performance and effectiveness of the overall PRKC organization.

Who We Are

Partnership for Rural King County (PRKC) is a grassroots consortium of neighborhood residents, community associations, non-profits, outdoor user groups and educational agencies dedicated to conservation and support of rural communities and surrounding lands in eastern King County located in Washington State.

PRKC Mission Statement:

PRKC works with eastern King County rural communities in Issaquah, Grand Ridge, Preston, Fall City, Sammamish, North Bend, Snoqualmie, Carnation, Redmond and Duvall to ensure the long-term sustainability of working forestland, farmland, outdoor recreation and biodiversity of our special region.

Shared Values

Through work with participating organizations and communities, PRKC has identified many common threads, areas of concern, community and ecological values we share. We leverage these shared values as the basis upon which we engage the community and focus our effort. These shared values are identified and addressed in the form of PRKC Assertions and Priorities.

PRKC Assertions

PRKC Assertions are statements which we believe to be true and which guide PRKC Priorities. They are:

- Rural life is compatible with healthy ecosystems and supports healthy living in neighboring metropolitan areas;
- Local working forests are a critical part of ensuring long-term forest health, maintaining our rural view corridors, ensuring adequate wildlife habitat and protecting our watersheds;
- Our communities are enriched immeasurably by the presence and availability of local farms and farm products;
- Outdoor recreation and natural beauty are highly valued in the Pacific Northwest by residents and tourists;
- Demand on our natural areas, forest and farm land will continue to increase with population growth;
- Land prices and development pressures will continue to grow at exponential rates;
- Public/Private partnerships are paramount to realizing our goals.
- The “value” of any individual property, whether the measure is economic, biodiversity, habitat, etc, both contributes to and is dependent on, the collective health of the region in each of these areas.
- The sustainable health of the region requires long-range community planning and effort (i.e. several generations from vision to completion)

PRKC Priorities

PRKC Priorities identify our areas of focus and effort. They include:

1. Conserving working forest lands through encouragement of **Sustainable Forestry**
2. Supporting and promoting **Local Farms, Farm Products and Services**
3. Conserving and enhancing local **Outdoor Recreation**
4. Fostering wide community initiative and commitment to **Environmental Stewardship**

PRKC Stakeholders

Our responsibility is to achieve our stated mission effectively and transparently, consistent with the Shared Values and the PRKC Priorities. In this, we are accountable to our stakeholders.

Our stakeholders include:

- Community members, including future generations, who choose our rural areas for their homes;
- Partner organizations who subscribe to our Shared Values
- Organizations and individuals that contribute to PRKC finances, initiatives or services;

- Organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, with whom we work;
- PRKC Staff, supporters and volunteers;
- Ecosystems, which cannot speak for or defend themselves;
- Residents of King County who benefit directly and indirectly from the success of PRKC's activities

In balancing the different views of our stakeholders, we will be guided by our mission, Shared Values and the PRKC Priorities.

How We Work

PRKC enables stakeholders to play a part in ensuring the sustainability of our area by anticipating future changes to our region and encouraging community and organizational networking in order to respond to those changes in a manner consistent with our Shared Values. We work with existing private and public agencies, identify opportunities for resource sharing and facilitate collaboration.

Initiatives and Services

The PRKC Board and the Executive Director work together to identify prioritize and manage specific projects and services in support of the Shared Values. Projects are managed by Committee Leads, have deliverables according to a timeline and are referred to as Initiatives. Services are managed by the Executive Director with the guidance of the Board and Committee Leads and are typically provided on an ongoing basis. An example of an Initiative is the PRKC Local Forestry Links project. An example of a service is the Community Calendar located on the PRKC website www.PRKC.org/Calendar.

PRKC Initiatives and Services are reviewed and updated by the Board and Executive Director annually and captured in the Program of Work document.

Community Networking

PRKC maintains relationships with neighborhood associations and informal neighborhood groups. We maintain a list of neighborhood leads. PRKC **Neighborhood Leads** develop a neighborhood contact list (usually email) for folks in their neighborhood; they are the people we go to with questions for and about the neighborhood; and, who help reach out to the residents of the neighborhood for events and info.

Members of the community are invited and encouraged to serve on the PRKC Board, in PRKC Committees and to participate in PRKC Initiatives.

Organization Networking

PRKC maintains relationships with public and private local organizations with focus on conservation, forestry, recreation and farms.

Partner Organizations endorse the PRKC Shared Values informally and formally and participate in PRKC initiatives appropriate to their interest. Designated **Organizational Contacts** are responsible for communicating to appropriate PRKC initiative leads to ensure organizational goals are represented in public communications. Organizational contacts are also responsible for communicating to the organization's board and members about PRKC efforts and events.

Members of partner organizations are invited and encouraged to serve on the PRKC Board, in PRKC Committees and to participate in PRKC Initiatives.

Public Representation

PRKC seeks to develop relationships with Local and State Government, Unincorporated Area Councils (UACs), Tribal Councils and others to further the advancement of the PRKC Priorities.

PRKC is not directed by any political party affiliation, business interest or specific interest group.

PRKC works on the premise of not being exclusive with regard to those participating in the process. As community associations and organizations participate in collaborative processes, they will be identified.

Principles

PRKC seeks to advance the PRKC Priorities for the conservation of rural communities and surrounding lands in eastern King County. In doing so, we conform to the principles described in Appendix A.

Organizational Governance

Community Members

Community members are individuals and organizations which leverage PRKC initiatives and services.

Board

The board is comprised of individual community members and, ideally, is broadly representative of the communities we serve. Members of nonprofit boards are typically motivated by a desire to serve the community and the personal satisfaction of volunteering. Nonprofit board members may not receive monetary compensation for serving on the board. The typical term for a Board member is 2-4 years.

The PRKC Board's responsibility is to:

1. **Provide continuity for the organization** by setting up PRKC as a non-profit corporation or legal existence, and to represent the organization's point of view through interpretation of PRKC Priorities, initiatives and services, and advocacy for them;
2. **Select and appoint a chief executive** to whom responsibility for the administration of the organization is delegated, including:
 - to review and evaluate his/her performance regularly on the basis of a specific job description, including executive relations with the board, leadership in the organization, in program planning and implementation, and in management of the organization and its personnel
 - to offer administrative guidance and determine whether to retain or dismiss the executive;
3. **Govern the organization by broad policies and objectives**, formulated and agreed upon by the chief executive and staff (if any), including to assign priorities and ensure the PRKC's

capacity to carry out initiatives by continually reviewing its work;

4. Acquire sufficient resources for the PRKC operations and to finance the initiatives and services adequately;

5. Account to the public for the initiatives and services of the organization and expenditures of its funds, including:

- to provide for fiscal accountability, approve the budget, and formulate policies related to contracts from public or private resources

- to accept responsibility for all conditions and policies attached to new, innovative, or experimental programs.

The Board can configure PRKC in whatever structure it prefers to meet the organization's mission and usually does so via specifications in bylaws. The Board Development Committee and Board Chair are responsible for recruiting Board Members.

Meeting minutes will be captured for all board meetings and made available to Board and Committee members within one week of the meeting.

ByLaws may indicate the Executive Committee can make decisions in place of the board when needed.

Committees

The Board carries out its operations using a variety of board committees. The Board will:

1. Establish committees when it's apparent that issues are too complex and/or numerous to be handled by the entire board.
2. Establish standing committees in the by-laws for ongoing, major activities and initiatives
3. Establish ad hoc committees for short-term activities and initiatives
4. Recommend policy for approval by the entire board.
5. Make full use of board members' expertise, time and commitment, and ensure diversity of opinions on the board.
6. Not supplant responsibility of each board member as they operate at the board level and not the staff level.
7. Meet monthly (this is typical), every two months, or every three months; if meetings are not held monthly, attempt to have committees meet during the months between full board meetings.

Committee meeting minutes will be captured and made available to all Board and Executive Committee members within one week of the meeting.

Committee Guidelines

1. The committee must have specific charge or set of tasks to address.
2. Committee sponsor must ensure all board members understand the committee's charge.
3. At least two board members should serve on a committee.
4. Board members should not serve on more than two committees at a time.
5. In each board meeting, the committee chair will report the committee's work since the past board meeting.
6. Non-board volunteers can serve as members of the committee.

7. Staff members (if appropriate) can serve as committee members.
8. Committee chairs are appointed by the board chair; or by committee consensus.
9. The chief executive should service *ex officio* to the board and any relevant committees.

Standing Committees

Board Development	Ensures effective board processes, structures and roles, including committee development, and board evaluation; sometimes includes role of nominating committee, such as keeping list of potential board members, orientation and training.
Education	Develops relationships with local schools and PTSAs, develops initiatives and supports PRKC priorities in the schools.
Executive	Oversees operations of the board; often acts on behalf of the board during on-demand activities that occur between meetings, and these acts are later presented for full board review; comprised of board chair, other officers and/or committee; performs evaluation of chief executive.
Farm	Develops relationships with local and sustainable farming organizations, explores opportunities for value-add communications, projects or services. Coordinates outreach efforts to small farmers.
Finance	Oversees development of the budget; ensures accurate tracking/monitoring/accountability for funds; ensures adequate financial controls; often led by the board treasurer; pursues grant opportunities.
Forestry	Develops programs and projects that promote local sustainable forestry. Coordinates outreach efforts to small land owners.
Fundraising	Oversees development and implementation of the Fundraising Plan; identifies and solicits funds from external sources of support.
Land	Partners with existing public and private agencies on strategies for land conservation and protection through private stewardship, public acquisitions and trusts.
Marketing	Oversees development and implementation of the Marketing Plan, including identifying potential clients, their needs, how to meet those needs with products/services/programs, and how to promote the programs.
Political	Works to understand planning and proposed changes to rural areas and communities.. Develops relationships with elected officials and government staff to be included in planning and policy discussions.
Public Relations	Represents PRKC to the community; enhances the organization's image, including communications with the press.
Recreation	Develops relationships with local outdoor recreation organizations, explores opportunities for value-add communications, projects or services. Coordinates outreach efforts to equestrian, hiking, fishing, biking, and boating communities.
Stewardship	Develops relationships with private and public stewardship support organizations, explores opportunities for value-add communications, programs or services. Coordinates outreach efforts to land owners and individual community members.

Organizational Officers

PRKC has four organizational officers with specific responsibilities. These offices form the membership of the Executive Committee and include:

- Executive Director, Appointed by the Board
- Board Chair, Appointed by the Board
- Treasurer, Appointed by the Board
- Secretary, Appointed by the Board

Executive Director

The board chooses the executive director who is the one person who is ultimately responsible to carry out the wishes of the board. The Executive Director provides:

Leadership

- Advises the Board
- Advocates / promotes organization and stakeholder change related to PRKC mission and Shared Values
- Supports motivation and participation of staff and community with initiatives, services and operations

Vision and Current Information

- Ensures staff and Board have sufficient and up-to-date information
- Looks to the future for change opportunities
- Interfaces between Board and volunteers
- Interfaces between PRKC and the wider community

Decision Making

- Formulates policies and planning recommendations to the Board
- Decides or guides courses of action in operations by staff

Management

- Oversees operations
- Implements plans
- Manages human resources (if appropriate)
- Manages financial and physical resources

Board Development

- Assists in the selection and evaluation of board members
- Makes recommendations, supports Board during orientation and self-evaluation
- Supports Board's evaluation of Chief Executive

Board Chair

The Board Chair's role is central to coordinating the work of the board, executive director and committees. The chair's role has appointive power for committees, depending on what is specified about this role in the bylaws. The power of the board chair is usually through persuasion and general leadership. Specific responsibilities including:

- Serves as the Chief Volunteer of PRKC;
- Acts in partnership with the Chief Executive in achieving the PRKC mission and priorities;
- Provides leadership to the Board of Directors, who sets policy and to whom the Chief Executive is accountable;
- Chairs meetings of the Board after developing the agenda with the Chief Executive;
- Leads in the selection and evaluation of board members
- Makes recommendations, supports Board during orientation and self-evaluation
- Supports Board's evaluation of Chief Executive

- Encourages Board's role in strategic planning;
- Appoints the chairpersons of committees, in consultation with other Board members;
- Serves *ex officio* as a member of committees and attends their meetings when invited;
- Discusses issues confronting the organization with the Chief Executive;
- Helps guide and mediate Board actions with respect to PRKC priorities, Initiatives and governance concerns;
- Reviews with the Chief Executive any issues of concern to the Board;
- Monitors financial planning and financial reports;
- Plays a leading role in fundraising activities;
- Performs formal performance of the Chief Executive and informal evaluations of the effectiveness of the Board members;
- Evaluates annually the performance of the PRKC in achieving its mission, priorities and initiatives
- Performs other responsibilities assigned by the Board.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is a member of the Board with the following responsibilities:

- Manages PRKC finances and administrates PRKC fiscal matters;
- Chairs the PRKC Finance Committee;
- Provides annual budget to the board for members' approval;
- Ensures development and board review of financial policies and procedures

Secretary

The Secretary is a member of the Board with the following responsibilities:

- Maintains records of the board and ensures effective management of PRKC's records;
- Manages minutes of board meetings;
- Ensures minutes are distributed to members within 1 week after each meeting;
- Is sufficiently familiar with legal documents (articles, by-laws, IRS letters, etc.) to note applicability during meetings.

Staff

Staff report to the executive director and may support the work of the committees.

Volunteers

Volunteers are unpaid personnel who assist staff, serve on committees and generally work under the direction of the executive director.

Conclusion

PRKC supports communities and community members by promoting balance between community, economy and the environment. We facilitate community and organizational networking, planning and resource sharing in the PRKC Priority areas of:

- Working Forest Land
- Farms
- Outdoor recreation
- Private Landowner Stewardship

In support of the PRKC Priorities, we seek to enable private landowners, small farmers and communities to play a part in ensuring the sustainability of our region, work with private and public organizations on conservation projects and help communities participate in Growth Management policy decisions. We seek to identify and facilitate win-win partnerships among stakeholders around Shared Values.

APPENDIX A: PRKC Governing Principles

PRKC seeks to advance the PRKC Agenda for the preservation of rural communities and surrounding lands in eastern King County. In doing so, we conform to the following principles described below:

Independence

We aim to be both politically and financially independent. Our governance, programs and policies will be non-partisan, independent of specific governments, political parties and the business sector.

Decision Making

We respect diverse opinions and will strive to ensure broad perspectives are discussed fairly in Board and Committee discussions. Board and Committee members may make motions for action, resolution or changes to bylaws at any time as guided by the Chair. Board and Committee members will have the opportunity to vote on the proposal and majority rule will determine outcome.

Responsible Advocacy

We will ensure that our advocacy is consistent with our mission, grounded in our work and advances defined public interests. We will work to develop clear processes for adopting public policy positions, (including for partners where appropriate,) explicit ethical policies that guide our choices of advocacy strategy, and ways of identifying and managing potential conflicts of interest among various stakeholders.

Effective Programs

We seek to work in genuine partnership with local communities, non-profits and other public and private organizations aiming at sustainable practices and development responding to local needs.

Privacy

We will, to the best of our ability, respect the privacy requests of individuals and groups with regard to sharing contact information with partner and affiliated organizations. Individuals who join email distribution lists will be given privacy options.

Non-Discrimination

We value, respect and seek to encourage diversity, and seek to be impartial and nondiscriminatory in all our activities.

Transparency

We are committed to openness, transparency and honesty about our structures,

mission, policies and activities. We will communicate actively to stakeholders about ourselves, and make information publicly available.

Reporting

We seek to comply with relevant governance, financial accounting and reporting requirements. We report at least once a year on our activities and achievements. Reports will describe

- Mission and values;
- Objectives and outcomes achieved in program and advocacy;
- Impact within the Community;
- Environmental impact;
- Main sources of funding from corporations, foundations, governments, and individuals;
- Financial performance;
- Compliance with this Charter; and
- Contact details.

Accuracy of information

We will adhere to generally-accepted standards of technical accuracy and honesty in presenting and interpreting data and research, using and referencing independent research.

Good Governance

We should be held responsible for our actions and achievements. We will do this by: having a clear mission, organizational structure and decision-making processes; by acting in accordance with Shared Values, agreed upon procedures; by ensuring that our programs achieve outcomes that are consistent with our mission; and by reporting on these outcomes in an open and accurate manner.

We seek to follow principles of best practice in governance and will have:

- A Board which supervises and evaluates the chief executive, and oversee program and budgetary matters. The Board will define overall strategy, consistent with the organizational mission, ensure that resources are used efficiently and appropriately, that performance is measured, that financial integrity is assured and that public trust is maintained;
- Written procedures covering the appointment, responsibilities and terms of members of the governing body, and preventing and managing conflicts of interest;
- A regular general meeting with authority to appoint and replace members of the governing body. We will listen to stakeholders' suggestions on how we can improve our work and will encourage input by people whose interests may be directly affected. We will also make it easy for the public to comment on our programs and policies.
- All written communication will be clear and concise and easily digestible by the general public.

Ethical Fundraising

Donors

We respect the rights of donors: to be informed about causes for which we are fundraising; to be informed about how their donation is being used; to have their names deleted from mailing lists; to be

informed of the status and authority of fundraisers; and to anonymity except in cases where the size of their donation is such that it might be relevant to our independence.

Use of Donations

In raising funds, we will accurately describe our activities and needs. Our policies and practices will ensure that donations further our organization's mission and agenda. Where donations are made for a specific purpose, the donor's request is honored. If we invite the general public to donate to a specific cause, each organization will have a plan for handling any shortfall or excess, and will make this known as part of its appeal.

Gifts In-kind

Some donations may be given as goods or services. To retain our effectiveness and independence, we will: record and publish details of all major institutional gifts and gifts-in-kind; clearly describe the valuation and auditing methods used; and ensure that these gifts contribute towards our mission.

Financial Controls

Internal financial control procedures will ensure that all funds are effectively used and will minimise the risk of funds being misused. We will follow principles of best practice in financial management.

Evaluation

We seek continuously to improve our effectiveness. We will work to define evaluation procedures for our boards, staff, programs and projects on the basis of mutual accountability.

Public Criticism

We will be responsible in our public criticisms of individuals and organizations, ensuring such criticism amounts to fair public comment.

Partners

We recognize our that organizational integrity extends to ensuring that our partners also meet the highest standards of probity and accountability possible will try to ensure that there are no links with organizations, or persons involved in illegal or unethical practices.

Human Resources

PRKC is currently a 100% volunteer organization comprised of community members, professionals and individual stakeholders. We recognize that our performance and success reflect the quality of our staff and volunteers and management practices.

Should PRKC pursue and secure staffing funding at any point in time, remuneration and benefits will strike a balance between public expectations of voluntary-based, not-for-profit organizations and the need to attract and retain the staff we need to fulfill our mission. Human resources policies will include procedures for evaluating the performance of all staff on a regular basis.

Bribery and Corruption

Our policies prohibit acts of bribery or corruption by staff or other persons working for, or on behalf of, the PRKC.