

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. **E25CT025**
Proposed ordinance no. **2026-0077**
Parcel no. **262202-9080**

ISABELLE AND NIKLAS ORMSETH

Application for Current Use Assessment under the Public Benefit Rating System

Location: 13505 SW 261st Place, Vashon

Applicants: **Isabelle and Niklas Ormseth**
PO Box 2785
Vashon, WA 98070
Telephone: (206) 861-2462
Email: bella@ormseth.net

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 5.05 acres for 90% reduction in appraised value.

Examiner's Recommendation: Approve 5.05 acres for 90% 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. E25CT025, 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 Niklas Ormseth 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 13505 SW 261st Place, Vashon, Parcel No. 262202-9080, owned by the Applicants Niklas and Isabelle Ormseth.
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.

PBRS categories:	Aquifer protection area	5
	Buffer to public or current use classified land	3
	Forest stewardship land	5
	Rural open space	5
	Significant wildlife or fish habitat	5
	Surface water quality buffer	8
	Watershed protection area	5
	<hr/> Total points awarded	<hr/> 36

The DNRP-recommended score of 36 points results in a 90% 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). 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. 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. **Forest stewardship land – 5 points.** The property contains more than five acres of contiguous forest. The owners worked with a county forester to have an approved forest stewardship plan.
9. **Rural open space – 5 points.** The property is in the rural area and contains more than five acres of contiguous forested open space, which is more than the category's required five acre minimum.
10. **Significant wildlife or salmonid habitat – 5 points.** A staff site visit established that the property contains 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).
11. **Surface water quality buffer – 8 points.** Paradise Cove Creek, a Type F stream, bisects the northwest corner of the property. As required by county code (KCC 21A.24.358.B), the buffer width required for Type F waters is 200 feet. The owners are providing a qualifying buffer of native vegetation to the south and east of this stream that averages approximately 425 feet in width, which is more than two times the buffer required.
12. **Watershed protection area – 5 points.** The enrolling open space contains 5.05 acres of native forest cover which is more than 65% of the total property acreage and there are no additional forest retention regulations in place for this property. The property qualifies for credit in this category.
13. **Contingencies, Conditions, and Requirements.**

The Examiner incorporates all conditions and requirements identified in the PBRS Staff Report. Ex. 1.
14. **Enrollment Acreage.** The Applicant requested 5.0 acres and DNRP recommends 5.05 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.)
15. Approval of 36 points with a 90% 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 5.05 acres of parcel 262202-9080 with a 90% 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several 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
ISABELLE AND NIKLAS ORMSETH, FILE NO. E25CT025**

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:

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| 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 | Forest Stewardship Plan |