

SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM UPDATE OVERVIEW INFORMATION

The state legislature adopted several amendments to the Shorelines Management Act in 2000 and included a requirement that all cities and counties update their shoreline master programs in the next few years. The legislature's action was based on the fact that few states municipalities had updated their programs since adopting them in the 1970s. Other reasons for the legislative mandate are due to the following considerations:

- The amended Shoreline Management Act, RCW 90.58, places more emphasis on protection and enhancement of shoreline ecological functions and processes.
- Shoreline physical conditions have significantly changed since the 1970s.
- More comprehensive and scientific information regarding shoreline ecological conditions is now available and should be considered.

The Department of Ecology adopted Shoreline Master Program Planning Guidelines (WAC 173-26) in January 2004 which require that Spokane County undertake a comprehensive review of its Shoreline Management Program (SMP). This includes an update of field inventories, shoreline designations, goals, policies and use regulations. The State Legislature approved an "early adopters" program and appropriated funds to assist counties and cities willing to proceed this year. Spokane County applied for and received funds from the state and is participating in the early adopters program. This shoreline update effort addresses shorelines in the unincorporated area of Spokane County and shorelines within the Cities of Spokane Valley, Liberty Lake, Millwood, Rockford, Latah and Waverly. It will be at the discretion of the cities and towns to adopt the program completed by the County or make additional revisions then adopt.

The Board of Commissioners appointed a shorelines advisory committee (SAC) consisting of 10 stakeholders and charged the committee with the responsibility to review the goals, policies and shoreline designations and recommend appropriate changes. The SAC began its deliberations in April 2004 and completed its work in June of 2005. The following is a summary of the significant recommendations of the SAC:

1. The existing seven elements in the SMP are recommended to be retained; however the goals and policies in those elements include numerous minor revisions and a few additions. Generally, the revisions added or replaced words that are intended to clarify meaning and intent or to add emphasis. Some words were deleted as they were out of date, not any longer commonly used, or were not necessary to communicate meaning and intent. Some wording is deleted as redundant or is deemed to be too ambiguous to have any effect. Much of the added wording was based on the requirements of shoreline planning guidelines, WAC 173-26, or because the SAC simply exercised its discretion based on review of some of the materials listed below.
2. Three new elements are recommended to be added to the SMP addressing Shoreline Protection and Restoration, Private Property Rights and Education. Each element includes goals and policies. The Shoreline Protection and Restoration and Education Elements are proposed due to the operation of the requirements of WAC 173-26. The Private Property Rights Element is recommended because the SAC prefers private property rights be respected to the extent possible when implementing the revised SMP.

3. The revised SMP includes five shoreline designations suggested in WAC 173-26 which are Natural, Rural-Conservancy, High Intensity, Urban Conservancy, Shoreline Residential – The existing Pastoral Designation is eliminated. The existing Pastoral shoreline designation is recommended for elimination and the affected shorelines are redesignated Rural-Conservancy or Natural.
4. The Shorelines Designations Map is significantly altered due to the fact that four of the current shoreline designations are being eliminated and the new WAC 173-26 environmental designations are being incorporated into the SMP.
5. The SAC recommends new general shoreline designation management policies, ecological function maintenance policies, and shoreline designation criteria. The designation criteria are the basis for determining the geographical location of the shoreline environments. The management policies emphasize that shoreline encroachments shall result in no net-loss of ecological functions. Much of the wording is suggested by WAC 173-26.
6. Policies are recommended in each shoreline designation providing for additional protection for High Quality areas as designated by the Spokane County Conservation District 2005 Stream Inventory and Assessment. The revised SMP provides that there be essentially no degradation of the shoreline characteristics that are a basis of the High Quality Area designation. High Quality areas are essentially overlay designations superimposed over the underlying environmental designations.

The shoreline planning guidelines, WAC 173-26, require the County to consider the expertise and perspectives of the various agencies that have shoreline resource management responsibilities and/or interests. To this end, the Department formed a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) consisting of resource management type persons representing various local and state resource management agencies and some private entities. At each step of the update process TAG participants were sent drafts of the revised SMP and asked to contribute his or her expertise and comment on the program revisions within the framework of their entity's interests and expertise. Most of their comments have been incorporated into the draft revised SMP.

The SAC completed its deliberations in June 2005 and its recommendations are embodied in the Draft Revised Shoreline Master Program (RSMP) in Sections 2 entitled 'SMP Goals and Policies' and 3 entitled 'SMP Environmental Designations and Shoreline Management Policies.' Department of Building and Planning staff drafted the remaining sections of the program which consist of Sections 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 (refer to Draft RSMP on this website). The Spokane County Planning Commission began its deliberations on the Draft RSMP in November 2005 and completed its review on July 6, 2006. The Planning Commission essentially supported the recommendations of the SAC (RSMP Sections 2 and 3) and accepted, with numerous modifications, draft RSMP Sections 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and the Shoreline Designations Map.

The Planning Commission forwarded its recommendations in July 2006 to the Board of County Commissioners with findings of fact (posted on this website). The Board of Commissioners held a public hearing on the Draft Revised Shoreline Master Program on July 17, 2007 and deliberated on the public's comments in October and November 2007 and again in April, May and August of 2008. The Board completed its review of the public's comments and made numerous revisions to the text of the Draft and two changes to the Shoreline Designations Map. The Board will be

scheduling a public hearing on the revisions to be held later in the fall of 2008. **A summary of the Board's significant revisions to the Draft RSMP will be posted soon on this website.**

During the SMP update process all or portion of the following reference materials were reviewed by the SAC, the Planning Commission and Department of Building and Planning Staff:

Determination of Upstream Boundary Point on Southeastern Washington Streams and Rivers under the Requirements of the Shoreline Management Act of 1971, dated 2003.

Determination of Upstream Boundary Point on Northeastern Washington Streams and Rivers under the Requirements of the Shoreline Management Act of 1971, dated 1998.

The Spokane County Conservation District 2005 Stream Inventory and Assessment

URS Corporation Lake Shoreline Inventory and Assessment, 2002

"Analysis of Lake and Stream Shorelines in Spokane County" – Report", prepared by Landau Associates under contract with Spokane County, July 2005.

Current shoreline land use and Assessor's Office shoreline parcelization and current use assessment maps.

DNR and Avista 2004 color airphotos

Hangman Creek Comprehensive Flood Hazard Plan

Critical Areas reasonable use exceptions granted from 1997 to present

Shoreline exemptions logs from 1983 to present

Sumner and Everett SMPs

Port Townsend Shoreline Protection and Restoration Plan

WAC 173-26, Shoreline Master Program Guidelines

WAC 173-27, Shoreline Management Permit Procedures Guideline

Shorelines Management Act, RCW 90.58

Spokane County's current Shorelines Management Program

Technical resource information provided by the Department of Ecology