

JANUARY 2007

OKANOGAN REGIONAL SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Okanogan County is leading development of a regional Shoreline Master Program (SMP) for shorelines both within and outside cities and towns. The County, cities and towns all have Shoreline Master Programs in place. The regional SMP will update the existing ones. It will address shorelines in the context of the watershed as a whole as well as the unique needs and interests of each community.

Where are we in the process?

Science and planning consultants: Okanogan County has retained science and planning consultants to assist in developing the SMP.

- ENTRIX, Inc. is the County's science and facilitation consultant
- Highlands Associates is the County's planning consultant

The two firms will help the County develop a shoreline characterization and SMP provisions based on the findings of the inventory and analysis.

Inventory: Gene Wyllson, Okanogan County's GIS Coordinator, has been assembling information about shoreline areas for several months. There is more information about some areas than others; developing the inventory includes assessing the availability of data and identifying data gaps so that County staff and consultants know what they will and won't be able to analyze.

We have found that:

- There is a great deal of information about the Methow sub-basin because of all the studies and planning efforts that have been undertaken there
- Less is known about the Okanogan sub-basin; however, two projects currently underway will be able to contribute data later in the process
 - Golder Associates is conducting a floodplain study to support development of a Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan for the Okanogan sub-basin
 - The Okanogan Watershed Planning Unit will prepare a plan for the Okanogan River Basin, WRIA 49, pursuant to Chapter 90.82 RCW. The Okanogan Watershed Planning Unit and the initiating governments have decided to address all four Watershed Planning Act components. The Okanogan Plan will synthesize all data and findings, including new information developed to address the water quantity and habitat components, as well as instream flow, multi-purpose water storage, and water quality. It is the intent for the plan to provide an up-to-date, comprehensive set of policy and project recommendations for resource management in the Okanogan River Basin.
- Douglas County PUD has data about the Columbia River and its shorelines; however, the data has not yet been reviewed and its usefulness will need to be assessed
- There is very little information about lakes and smaller tributaries throughout Okanogan County



Analysis and characterization: County staff and science and planning consultants are considering how best to analyze the data that have been collected about Okanogan County's shorelines. ENTRIX, Inc. staff have developed models that can evaluate ecological function and the effects of various uses and activities on shoreline health. The next step in analyzing data and characterizing the County's shorelines will be adapting components of one or more models so that they can be used to inform us about the current condition of the shorelines and how development might affect shoreline and aquatic ecosystems.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG): The TAG will meet again soon to review progress on the inventory and discuss analysis and characterization.

How can I participate?

Okanogan County has formed a Shorelines Advisory Group (SAG) to identify issues of local importance and review and comment on draft elements of the SMP. The SAG is scheduled to meet eight times in 2007. Please visit our website for a schedule and more information about the SAG. All stakeholders are welcome to attend the SAG meetings and participate in caucuses.

Generally, SAG meetings will be held on the 4th Wednesday of the month, however, it's important to know that:

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- The SAG will not meet every month
- Meetings may be re-scheduled if they conflict with holidays
- Additional meetings may be scheduled. Please contact us to confirm meeting dates!

Public comment will be entertained at the beginning or end of each meeting, at the chair's discretion. The next meeting is scheduled for March 28th. All meetings will be held in the Okanogan County Commissioners' Hearing Room, 123 North 5th Avenue, Okanogan.

Three public comment periods are planned in 2007 and 2008.

For more information about Shoreline Management planning in Okanogan County

Visit the Okanogan County Office of Planning and Development's web site at <http://okanogancounty.org/planning/index.html>. At the left hand side of the screen, click "Shoreline Master Program"

Visit the Department of Ecology's Shoreline Management web site at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/SMA/index.html>.

- Call Char Beam at 509/422-7113

Okanogan County will publish this newsletter from Fall, 2006 until Spring, 2008. To add your name to or remove your name from the mailing list, please contact Okanogan County Natural Resources: by phone at 509/422-7113; or by email at cbeam@co.okanogan.wa.us.



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