

May 2008
**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?

Draft General Regulations were presented to the Shoreline Advisory Group (SAG) at the February 20th meeting. The science consultants presented a preliminary draft of the Okanogan County Shoreline Characterization at the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Shoreline Advisory Group (SAG) meetings on March 26th. We plan to present a draft of the shoreline designations for the members of the SAG in May.

Analysis and characterization: The science consultants have spent the last several months gathering and analyzing information about the lakes and streams that will be addressed in the SMP. They have used that information to develop a preliminary Shoreline Characterization—a report that will be used to identify shoreline areas that should be protected and those where modifications have altered or impaired ecological functions. The characterization will guide development of policies and regulations and the assignment of shoreline environment designations.

To conduct the analysis, the science consultants divided the eligible lakes and streams into analysis units (AUs) based on geomorphologic characteristics—that is, the landforms in and around each shoreline area. Most of the streams were divided into more than one AU due to changes in gradient and streambed substrate (bedrock, cobbles, gravel, etc.) A few large lakes were divided, as well, but in most cases each lake is a separate AU.

The science consultants then scored the ecological function of each AU by analyzing the impacts of stressors and assets in that AU. The stressors include:

- Bank Hardening
- Levees
- Water quality
- Permitted facilities
- Agricultural development
- Residential development
- Industrial development
- Mines
- Bridges
- Overwater structures
- Rail
- Roads
- Culverts
- Geologically hazardous areas
- Flow
- Boat ramps

The assets include:

- Aquatic species
- Riparian Species
- Upland Species
- Salmon spawning/rearing habitat
- ESA critical habitat
- Wetlands
- Riparian Vegetation
- Potential channel Migration Zones



The science consultants also analyzed the condition of each AU relative to the overall condition of the watershed in which it is located, as a means of assessing restoration potential. The watershed-scale factors include impervious surfaces, area in agricultural use, road density, developed area, fire disturbance, and water diversions. Currently, the analysis of science factors is being fine-tuned.

Next steps

Planning analysis: While the analysis of science factors was underway, the planning consultants have been collecting and analyzing information about various planning factors, including comprehensive plan designation, zoning, land use, existing shoreline environment designations, structures, and setbacks. The final shoreline characterization will be based on both science and planning factors—that is, it will take existing and planned uses into account, in addition to the AU scores described above, so that the proposed shoreline environment designations, policies, and regulations can be based on a thorough and realistic assessment of opportunities for shoreline protection and use.

Determining preliminary shoreline environment designation boundaries: The AU scores and planning analysis will be used to assign preliminary shoreline environment designations to all of the water bodies covered by the SMP. (Although they are not regulated under the SMP, streams and lakes on federal land will also be designated, as required by the Shoreline Management Act).

Washington State's SMP guidelines recommend six shoreline environments: Aquatic, Natural, Rural Conservancy, High Intensity, Urban Conservancy, and Shoreline Residential. Last June, staff developed a preliminary environment designation framework that used those six environments. At the suggestion of SAG members, a Shoreline Agricultural environment has been added. Staff and planning consultants will continue to refine the environment designation framework, based on the shoreline characterization, so that it will be an effective tool for protecting shoreline function in the context of development appropriate to shoreline areas.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG): The TAG met on March 26th to review the presentation of the Draft Shoreline 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. 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:

- 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 May 28th. Please check with us if you plan to attend as we are in the process of seeking a new meeting location.

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 Angie Hubbard at 509/422-7090

Okanogan County will publish this newsletter from Fall, 2006 until Winter, 2009. To add your name to or remove your name from the mailing list, please contact Okanogan County Natural Resources: by phone at 509/422-7090; or by email at ahubbard@co.okanogan.wa.us.