

Okanogan Regional Shoreline Master Program Shoreline Environment Designation Framework May 28, 2008 Discussion Paper

This framework outlines the process used to propose shoreline environment designations in areas under the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Management Act in Okanogan County (or, in the case of National Forest lands, must be designated), and describes each of the shoreline environments proposed for such areas.

Designation process

Environment designations will be a function of the following factors:

- The biological and physical character of the shoreline, based on the inventory and analysis findings
- The existing and planned land use patterns
- Current zoning
- Current shoreline environment designations
- Shoreline environment designation criteria from the State's SMP guidelines

Because Okanogan County's Comprehensive Plan is out of date and most shoreline areas are simply designated "Intensive Agriculture" or "Unclassified", the planned land use, as reflected in the Comprehensive Plan, will not be a major factor in designating shoreline environments within the unincorporated areas. In the absence of a recent comprehensive plan, existing land use patterns and zoning are the only realistic means of assessing planned land uses.

Since most of the cities and towns within the County have relatively recent comprehensive plans, these jurisdictions will be able to better fit shoreline designations in a manner consistent with both the SMA as well as locally determined desires.

Each Analysis Unit (AU) has been assigned a preliminary designation based on:

- Science factors, as reflected in quadrant assignment. Each AU in Okanogan County has been assigned to one of four quadrants based on its condition and ecological assets
- A preliminary assessment of planning factors, including land use, ownership, current shoreline designation, and planning and zoning designations

At this stage, the proposed framework includes seven Shoreline Environments for use outside of UGAs. The next stage will include development of additional environments for use within UGAs.

The seven environments proposed for use outside of UGAs are:

- a. Natural
- b. Riverine/Lacustrine
- c. Conservancy
- d. Rural Conservancy
- e. Shoreline Recreational
- f. Shoreline Residential
- g. Aquatic

Some of the designations listed above may also be appropriate for use within UGAs. We also expect to use “Urban Conservancy” and “High-Intensity” designations within UGAs, and will consider others as warranted.

Shoreline Environment Descriptions

Ecologically intact shorelines, as used here, means those shoreline areas that retain the majority of their natural shoreline functions, as evidenced by the shoreline configuration and the presence of native vegetation. Generally, but not necessarily, ecologically intact shorelines are free of structural shoreline modifications, structures, and intensive human uses. In forested areas, they generally include native vegetation with diverse plant communities, multiple canopy layers, and the presence of large woody debris available for recruitment to adjacent water bodies. Recognizing that there is a continuum of ecological conditions ranging from near natural conditions to totally degraded and contaminated sites, this term is intended to delineate those shoreline areas that provide valuable functions for the larger aquatic and terrestrial environments which could be lost or significantly reduced by human development. Whether or not a shoreline is ecologically intact is determined on a case-by-case basis, based on the shoreline characterization.

The term "ecologically intact shorelines" applies to all shoreline areas meeting the above criteria, ranging from larger reaches that may include multiple properties to small areas located within a single parcel.

All lands within shoreline jurisdiction have resource value and present opportunities for protection and restoration. Where feasible, ecological functions and processes should be retained. Where that is not feasible, loss of function and values due to development must be mitigated with restoration.

Environment	Abbreviation	Classification criteria	Notes
Natural	N	<p>A "Natural" environment designation would be assigned to shoreline areas where any of the following characteristics apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shoreline is ecologically intact and therefore currently performing an important, irreplaceable function or ecosystem-wide process that would be damaged by human activity; • The shoreline is considered to represent ecosystems and geologic types that are of particular scientific and educational interest; or • The shoreline is unable to support new development or uses without significant adverse impacts to ecological functions or risk to human safety. 	<p>Such shoreline areas would include lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service that are not accessible by road, and largely undisturbed portions of shoreline areas such as wetlands, unstable bluffs, and ecologically intact shoreline habitats. Shorelines inside or outside incorporated municipalities and Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) may be designated as "Natural."</p> <p>Areas with significant existing agriculture lands would be included in the "Natural" designation only where the existing agricultural operations involve very low intensity uses that have no significant impact on natural ecological functions, and where the intensity of use and impacts associated with the agriculture activities is unlikely to expand in a manner inconsistent with the "Natural" designation.</p> <p>Subdivision would not be allowed in lands designated "Natural."</p>

Environment	Abbreviation	Classification criteria	Notes
Riverine/Lacustrine	R/L	<p>A "Riverine/Lacustrine" environment designation shall be assigned to shoreline areas where any of the following characteristics apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shoreline may or may not be ecologically intact; and • The shoreline is currently performing an important, irreplaceable function or ecosystem-wide process that could be damaged by intensive development or activity; and • The shoreline is unable to support intensive development or uses without significant adverse impacts to ecological functions or risk to human safety; and • The shoreline is privately owned; and • The shoreline is either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ currently supporting lesser-intensity resource-based uses, such as agriculture, forestry, or recreational uses, or is designated agricultural or forest lands pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170; or ○ located within an incorporated municipality. 	<p>Such shoreline areas include broad valley bottoms currently used as grazing lands and large complex wetland areas within incorporated municipalities and Urban Growth Areas (UGAs).</p> <p>Subdivision would not be allowed in lands designated "Riverine/Lacustrine."</p>

Environment	Abbreviation	Classification criteria	Notes
Conservancy	C	<p>A "Conservancy" environment designation shall be assigned to shoreline areas where any of the following characteristics apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shoreline is currently performing an important, irreplaceable function or ecosystem-wide process, even though partially developed or supporting human use; and • The shoreline is either <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ publicly owned; or ○ subject to severe access limitation or other environmental limitations that render it unsuitable for development; and • The shoreline is currently supporting lesser-intensity resource-based uses, such as agriculture, forestry, or recreational uses, or is designated agricultural or forest lands pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170; • The shoreline is of high recreational value or with unique historic or cultural resources. 	<p>Such shoreline areas include lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service that are accessible by road and properties that include or are adjacent to steep banks, floodplains, channel migration zones, or other flood-prone areas. Shorelines within or outside incorporated municipalities and Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) may be designated as "Conservancy."</p> <p>Subdivision would not be allowed in lands designated "Conservancy."</p> <p>Lands that may otherwise qualify for designation as "Conservancy" and that are designated as "mineral resource lands" pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170 and WAC 365-190-070 may be assigned a designation within the "Conservancy" environment that allows mining and associated uses in addition to other uses consistent with the "Conservancy" environment.</p>

Environment	Abbreviation	Classification criteria	Notes
Rural Conservancy	R-C	<p>A "Rural Conservancy" environment designation would be assigned to shoreline areas outside incorporated municipalities and outside urban growth areas, as defined by RCW 36.70A.110, where any of the following characteristics apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shoreline is currently accommodating residential uses outside urban growth areas and incorporated cities or towns; • The shoreline is supporting human uses but subject to environmental limitations, such as properties that include or are adjacent to steep banks, floodplains, channel migration zones, or other flood-prone areas; • The shoreline has low-intensity water-dependent uses. 	Subdivision would be allowed in lands designated "Rural Conservancy", subject to regulations and development standards to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological function.
Aquatic	A	Lands waterward of the OHWM shall be designated "Aquatic."	Subdivision would not be allowed in lands designated "Aquatic."
Shoreline Residential	S-Res	An environment designation of "Shoreline Residential" shall be assigned to shoreline areas that support a predominance of single-family or multi-family residential development or are planned and platted for residential development. Most lands designated "Shoreline Residential" will be within incorporated municipalities or Urban Growth Areas.	Subdivision would be allowed in lands designated "Shoreline Residential", subject to regulations and development standards to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological function.

Environment	Abbreviation	Classification criteria	Notes
Shoreline Recreational	S-Rec	An environment designation of “Shoreline Recreational” would be assigned to shoreline areas within or in close proximity to Urban Growth Areas that support or are planned for mixed-use recreation oriented development. The designation will provide flexibility for water oriented mixed-use development.	Most lands designated “Shoreline Recreational” will be undeveloped. They will have adequate public facilities, or be so located that such facilities can be provided to them in an efficient manner. Where such facilities are not available, they will be required concurrent with development; use of wells, private water systems, and septic systems will not be allowed. Public access will be required for all residential developments of more than four lots and for all other developments. Participation in a master-planned public access system, such as a lakeshore trail system, and provision of facilities that promote physical activity will be encouraged. Master-planned resorts and other development consistent with the preservation of rural recreation-oriented character are suitable uses in the “Shoreline Recreational” environment, subject to appropriate conditions. Subdivision would be allowed in lands designated “Shoreline Recreational”, subject to regulations and development standards to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological function.