Draft Maps of Proposed Shoreline Jurisdictions

These maps show the proposed shoreline jurisdictions for San Juan County and indicate the areas that will be addressed in the SMP Update.

Orcas and Surrounding Islands

San Juan County Shoreline Master Program Update

What is the purpose of tonight’s meeting?
The purpose of tonight’s meeting is to provide you with information about the Shoreline Master Program Update:

- What the SMP Update is and what it isn’t
- The areas within the County that the Update will address
- The schedule for conducting the Update and how you can stay involved
- Draft maps of the existing shoreline inventory within the County

Most importantly, we want to hear from you: What are your concerns and questions about the Update; and, what can you tell us about the County’s shorelines?

What is the Shoreline Master Program (SMP)?
The Shoreline Master Program (SMP) is a comprehensive shoreline land-use plan that includes policies and regulations for the use and development of the shoreline. The SMP protects shoreline processes, promotes public access, and accommodates all appropriate shoreline uses, as well as balances public and private interests. Until about 40 years ago, development in Washington’s shoreline areas tended to be piecemeal and uncoordinated. To improve and protect state shoreline areas, the Washington Legislature passed the state Shoreline Management Act in 1971. The public ratified the Act in a 1972 referendum vote.

The SMP recognizes private property rights and is not an effort to force waterfront property owners to move or tear down their homes. Updates to the Shoreline Master Program’s development regulations only apply to future development occurring after adoption. There are no retroactive shoreline master program requirements. Similarly, no new public access or specific protection areas are being proposed as part of the Shoreline Master Program Update, rather the updated SMP includes policies on when and how future shoreline access and habitat protection should be provided.

Why are we doing this update?
To regulate shoreline development, the state law requires local governments and the Department of Ecology to mutually regulate shoreline development, use, and protection. The
update of the County’s Shoreline Master Program is required by June 30, 2013. The Department of Ecology has provided grant funding to support the County’s effort through the entire process.

The law has three main purposes:

• Encourage reasonable and orderly development of shorelines, with an emphasis on water-dependent and related uses that control pollution and prevent damage to the natural environment.

• Protect the natural character of Washington shorelines, including the land, vegetation, wildlife, and shoreline environment.

• Promote public access and provide opportunities to enjoy views and recreational activities in shoreline areas.

What’s covered by the SMP?
The Shoreline Management Act applies to lakes greater than 20 acres, marine shorelines and aquatic area, land within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark of such waterbodies, and their associated wetlands. Shoreline rules apply to any land use activity that occurs within the shoreline jurisdiction as defined in the SMP. The rules cover shoreline development activities, including the following examples:

• Construction of new structures such as houses, sheds, and decks

• Building height

• Construction of in-water and over-water structures such as docks, buoys, piers, and marinas

• Water-dependent uses such as marina facilities and ferry terminals

• Land development such as clearing, grading, dredging, or filling

• Other activities along the shorelines, including restoration (e.g., riparian planting, bank stabilization), trails, and public access.

While the shoreline jurisdiction is well-defined it is likely that a flexible approach -- one that recognizes diverse shoreline types and values, and that balances property rights and shoreline protection -- will be used to develop any new shoreline rules.

How can you stay involved?
Over the next two years, San Juan County Community Development and Planning will be hosting a series of Island Summit Meetings regarding the update to the County’s Shoreline Master Program (SMP). The first round of Island Summit Meetings, currently being held on the major ferry served islands during the first week of March, will introduce the public to the 2-year SMP update process and identify the concerns of citizens.

What is the schedule?

Where are we now and what is next?
We are at the very beginning of the SMP Update process. We have developed draft inventory maps that describe what currently exists in San Juan County. These maps are the baseline for our shoreline analysis. Our next step after the first series of Summits is to finalize our inventory maps and conduct analysis of shoreline function, uses, challenges, and any opportunities for restoration or protection. We will then:

• Hold another series of Community Summits to develop a vision for the future of the County’s shorelines (Summer 2011).

• Develop draft policies, regulations, and shoreline designations designed to achieve the vision (Starting Fall 2011).

• Hold a final series of summits to review and get public input on the draft policies, regulations, and designations (Summer 2012).

For more information visit www.sanjuanco.com or contact Colin Maycock, San Juan County Department of Community Development & Planning at 360-370-7573 or colinm@sanjuanco.com