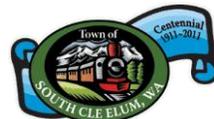




# Community Visioning Report

Kittitas County Regional Shoreline Master Program Update

October 2012



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Kittitas County Regional Shoreline Master Program Update

Kittitas County  
City of Ellensburg  
City of Cle Elum  
Town of South Cle Elum

This document is a required deliverable for **Task 3.1** of Ecology Grant No: G1200054

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## Table of Contents

1. Introduction and General Requirements.....	1
2. Community Visioning Activities.....	2
A. Open House and Workshop Events.....	2
B. Other Targeted Outreach.....	3
C. Community Visioning Questionnaire.....	3
3. Summary of Feedback/ Key Themes.....	3
A. Shoreline Use and Development.....	4
B. Resource Protection and Restoration.....	5
C. Public access.....	6
4. Shoreline Management Recommendations.....	7
A. Community Vision Statement.....	7
B. Shoreline Goals and Strategies.....	7
5. Appendices.....	9

## 1. Introduction and General Requirements

Kittitas County, the Cities of Cle Elum and Ellensburg, and the Town of South Cle Elum have collectively initiated a Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update in accordance with the Washington State Shoreline Management Act and Shoreline Master Program Guidelines. The update process includes an inventory; environmental analysis and characterization; shoreline policies, environment designations, and use regulations; cumulative impacts and uses analysis; shoreline restoration plan; and a formal local adoption process for each individual local SMP. The SMP will apply to shorelines of the state, generally including lakes greater than 20 acres and streams with a mean annual flow greater than 20 cubic feet per second (cfs), together with shorelands within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark and associated wetlands (RCW 90.58.030).

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) directs local governments and the Department of Ecology to “actively encourage participation” by all interested parties in the shoreline management planning process (RCW 90.58.130).

According to the Department of Ecology SMP Handbook (Chapter 10 Community Visioning):

*Local governments that receive grant funds from Ecology for comprehensive SMP updates must also conduct a community visioning process and prepare a report that summarizes the community visioning activities and discusses community goals for the shoreline. (The SMP Guidelines do not require a separate community visioning process.) This task, Task 3.1 of the Shoreline Master Program Planning Process, is part of the public participation process and should be included in the public participation plan.*

Ecology’s SMP Handbook lists four purposes of the community visioning task:

1. *Gain an understanding of the common shorelines interests held by the public.*
2. *Give the public an opportunity to review and understand the framework for the SMP update. This includes the shoreline conditions discussed in the Inventory and Characterization report, the statewide interests expressed by the SMA, and the requirements of the SMP Guidelines, including the standard to achieve no net loss of shoreline ecological conditions.*
3. *Identify community goals and aspirations for local shorelines within this framework.*
4. *Help to develop shoreline environment designation criteria, policies, uses and regulations.*

In December 2011 a Public Participation Program (PPP) was developed to guide community outreach efforts throughout the update process. Over the course of the update period, which is scheduled to conclude in December 2014, the County and Cities/Town will make an effort to engage all shoreline users and those interested in the SMP process. This community visioning report summarizes those outreach activities specifically related to the community visioning task required by Task 3.1 of the Department of Ecology Grant Agreement No. G1200054.

## **2. Community Visioning Activities**

Since the beginning of the SMP update process, Kittitas County, on behalf of the four planning jurisdictions, has facilitated several public participation opportunities, including staffing and meeting regularly with a Technical Advisory Committee, maintaining a highly informative and frequently updated webpage, drafting a quarterly SMP newsletter, presenting SMP status updates at public study sessions of the Kittitas Board of County Commissioners, hosting public meeting events, and distributing a community visioning questionnaire. As appropriate, notice of these activities has been provided via local newspapers, the County webpage, or email notifications.

More information on these community visioning activities is provided below. Citizen feedback generated through these activities helped the project team develop a community shoreline vision and recommended goals and strategies. This community-generated feedback will guide development of SMP goals, policies and regulations.

### ***A. Open House and Workshop Events***

In the summer of 2012 the County conducted a series of public outreach activities specifically focused on community visioning. The County hosted open house events on July 18<sup>th</sup> at the Kittitas County Fairgrounds in Ellensburg and on July 19<sup>th</sup> at the Kittitas Valley Senior Center in Cle Elum. A workshop was held at the Hal Holmes Community Center in Ellensburg on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Consistent with Ecology's SMP Handbook, these events were meant to provide information on the status and next steps in the regional SMP update, presented preliminary findings, and introduced shoreline planning topics to the general public.

The five objectives of the open house and workshop events were:

1. To introduce the shoreline planning process to the citizens of Ellensburg, Cle Elum, South Cle Elum, the unincorporated County, and any other parties interested in the update.
2. To provide information on the status and next steps in the regional SMP update, including ways the public can participate.
3. To present preliminary findings from the June 2012 draft Inventory and Characterization Report (ICR), and to gather public comments on the text, reach sheets, and maps.
4. To introduce shoreline planning topics such as shoreline environment designations, public access, and restoration.
5. To solicit feedback through the community visioning questionnaire.

The open houses were intended to be a less-structured public forum where citizens could gather information about the SMP update and community visioning, where as the workshop was intended to be a more-structured and interactive event where community values and visions would be discussed. There were 11 people in attendance at the July 18<sup>th</sup> open house, and only 3 at the July 19<sup>th</sup> open house (see Appendix B for a meeting summary). Due to low turnout at the open houses, many of resources prepared for those events were presented again at the workshop. Approximately 22 people attended the September 12<sup>th</sup> workshop (see Appendix D for discussion notes from the September 12<sup>th</sup> workshop). See

Appendix A for a detailed list of material, activities, and notice procedures used for the open house and workshop events.

### ***B. Other Targeted Outreach***

A County representative attended regular meetings of several existing community organizations in the applicable jurisdictions. At each meeting a status update of the SMP was provided, and members were encourage to solicit community visioning feedback through the questionnaire. The following groups were included in the community visioning targeted outreach efforts:

1. Master Builders Association, July 10, 2012 meeting
2. Kittitas County Field and Stream, September 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 meeting
3. Kiwanis of Ellensburg, September 17<sup>th</sup> 2012 meeting

A County representative also distributed questionnaires at the Ellensburg farmers market on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2012.

### ***C. Community Visioning Questionnaire***

Between July 2012 and October 2012 the County solicited citizen feedback on SMP topics through a community visioning questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed at the open house and workshop events, at targeted outreach events, and at the Ellensburg farmers market. Questionnaires were also made available at the County's Permit Center, and at the front counters at the Cities of Ellensburg, Cle Elum, and the Town of South Cle Elum. A digital version of the questionnaire was posted to the County's website, and a link to the questionnaire was distributed through a press release and via the County's SMP email list, and was published in a September 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 newspaper article in the Kittitas Daily Record.

The questionnaire contained a mix of 13 multiple choice and written response questions aimed at gathering public comment on issues related to shoreline use, values, restoration, public access, and opportunities for the future. A total of 25 responses were received. Completed questionnaires, along with a summary of all responses are provided in Appendix C.

## **3. Summary of Feedback/ Key Themes**

Participation in the community visioning process was highest among unincorporated Kittitas County residents and Ellensburg residents. Based on sign-in sheets from the community visioning events, residents of the unincorporated County had the highest participation (see Appendix A.). The highest response rate to the questionnaire was among Ellensburg residents (see Appendix C). Most feedback focused on activities occurring along rural County shorelines, such as recreation, flood protection,

protecting wildlife, and improving public access. Common urban comments related to improving visibility and accessibility of shorelines, especially at municipal parks.

### **A. Shoreline Use and Development**

#### **How is the shoreline used?**

The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate how they used designated shorelines in the county, cities, or town. The most frequent response was recreational uses, including hiking/walking, swimming, snowmobiling, fishing, viewing nature, horseback riding, hunting, boating, and cross country skiing. Other frequent responses were residential uses, boating facilities, and water diversion.

#### **What is unique/special about region's shorelines**

Participants in the community visioning workshop identified the following general themes as being unique or special about the region's shorelines: scenic and recreation values; the use of shorelines for agriculture; non-recreational transportation, and the use of the shorelines for flood control.

Because there are so many individual property owners along the region's shorelines, community members highlighted the importance of individual property owners' responsibility to properly manage and maintain their shorelines to ensure habitat quality, flood control, and protection of public property.

#### **What was valued about region's shorelines?**

Respondents were asked in the questionnaire to describe what they valued most about the region's shorelines. The primary value was public access, along with scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and wildlife. Below are a few representative responses:

- *To this point in time [shorelines are] not overused by large numbers of people seasonally, making accessibility possible with ease. But [there may be] future problems in the making.*
- *[Shorelines] keep our trees green, provide habitat, and fire protections...*
- *Accessibility! Please always have many entry/exit locations for the public. The beauty and serenity are invaluable! It would increase tourism in the valley.*
- *Public access. Flood control by vegetation and side-channels. Fish and wildlife habitat.*

#### **What needs to change?**

Many respondents to the questionnaire expressed a desire to change regulatory controls regarding water rights and flood control. Responses were mixed between those wanting no more development in flood prone areas to those wishing to simplify the permitting and regulatory process to develop one's property in floodplains.

At the community visioning workshop, citizens expressed frustration over the multiple levels of government regulation of shorelines, including the County, Cities, the Department of Ecology, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. It was difficult to determine which agency's rules needed to be followed first, and there were concerns that private property rights were not being respected. In the future, the community would like to see a change in the way agencies work in Kittitas County and for these agencies to avoid applying redundant or conflicting regulations.

At the community visioning workshop, citizens also provided feedback on aspects of shorelines they did not want to change. They wanted to maintain the current low population density along shorelines and the current level of recreational use. The existing access points and recreational opportunities should also to be maintained.

### **What is the vision for the next 5-10 years?**

At the community visioning workshop and in the questionnaire citizens were asked for to describe what they would and would not like to see along shorelines in the next 5-10. Below is a representative list of responses to this question:

- *Flood risk reduction, less development in floodplains and flood prone areas, leadership and deliberate master planning for wider scale recreation/preservation of shorelines*
- *A more simplified and easier shoreline permitting process. Better, more proactive flood control. More emphasis on helping landowners with shoreline development*
- *Better maintenance of existing access roads to the shorelines and hiking trails. Example is the road off Salmon La Sac to Fish Lake.*
- *Less government restrictions*
- *Better developed public access for boating, parking, signage, trails, and warnings*
- *Improvements for agriculture and livestock (no buffers)*
- *Flood protection, mitigation from flooding, ability to protect structures before floods.*

### **B. Resource Protection and Restoration**

#### **Perceived success of fish recovery efforts**

Questionnaire respondents were asked how they would describe the success of fish recovery efforts and which shorelines were in need of additional enhancement or restoration. Most respondents indicated that fish recovery efforts had been at least moderately successful. At the community visioning workshop, citizens discussed how opportunities for recreational fishing, especially for kids, had decreased. Certain streams used by be stocked by non-native fish, but this practice had been curtailed due to diminished native fish populations. Now that native stock seems to be rebounding, they would like to see more opportunities for kids to be able to fish on local streams.

### **Areas in need of enhancement or restoration**

Shorelines identified as in need of enhancement or restoration were:

- Lower Teanaway
- North Fork Teanaway (keeping cows out of river)
- Yakima River along I-90 and in Ellensburg
- Tributaries in City of Ellensburg (note—these are not in SMA jurisdiction)
- Yakima River Canyon
- Upper reach of Yakima River tributaries.
- Fiorito Creek and Mattoon Lake
- Elk Meadows (due to frequent flooding)

### **C. Public access**

#### **Satisfaction with public access**

The average response to the question regarding satisfaction with physical shoreline access was 2.9 out of 5, while the average response to the question regarding satisfaction with visual shoreline access was 3.4 out of 5. Public access was a popular theme in responses throughout the questionnaire, and appeared in discussion about how community members experienced shorelines, what they valued about shorelines, and what they wanted to see maintained or enhanced in the next 5-10 years. Two questions ask specifically where physical and visual public access could be improved. The following is a list of specific locations mentioned by respondents:

- Boat launches at Lake Kachess
- Boat launches Columbia River (x2)
- Boat launches at Yakima River (x4) Need more facilities (garbage, restrooms, etc.) along Yakima River and Yakima River Canyon
- Raft pull-out on Yakima River at Thorp
- Improve road end public access points
- Non-boater access to Yakima River. Need more trails, more park development, Teanaway Bridge, Ranger Loop area, Cascade Diversion Dam, Old Rotary Park
- Lake Cle Elum (x2)
- Yakima River generally (x2)
- Fix Rinehart Park boat launch
- Parks and picnic areas along the Yakima River need to be increased, as some areas are overused. Teanaway River at Highway 10 and Cascade Dam on Highway 10 need restroom facilities. Trail from Hyak to Yakima County line needs improved facilities.
- More benches on the Iron Horse trail so hikers or cyclists have access to rest.
- Turnouts and parking spots along Yakima Canyon (for scenic access)
- Upper Valley (improved physical and visual access)
-

## 4. Shoreline Management Recommendations

The feedback received during the community visioning process focused more on County issues than City/Town issues; however the discussion of flood protection; regulatory coordination; and property rights are applicable to all shoreline areas.

The community's goals and aspirations for the region's shorelines are reflected through the following community vision statement, goals and strategies.

### ***A. Community Vision Statement***

In the next 5-10 years the shorelines of Kittitas County, the City of Ellensburg, the City of Cle Elum, and the Town of South Cle Elum, will continue to be used and enjoyed in the many ways the community use and enjoy them today. Shorelines will continue to provide recreational opportunities for boating, hiking, fishing, and other types of recreation. The shorelines will play an important role in flood hazard prevention; and regulations guiding development should minimize development in flood prone areas. The success of fish recovery efforts will continue, and the region's lakes and streams will have thriving populations of fish that will support recreational fishing opportunities for all ages.

### ***B. Shoreline Goals and Strategies***

#### **Shoreline uses**

1. Respect private property rights in the development of shoreline regulations to ensure regulations are fair and easily understood.
2. Provide guidance to citizens on how local shoreline regulations relate to other agency rules, such as the Department of Ecology or the Department of Fish and Wildlife.
3. Recognize the importance of agricultural activities in shoreline use regulations.
4. Support existing and future recreational located along shorelines, including improvements to make sites more user friendly, i.e. signage, parking, restrooms, etc.
5. Support land use regulations that limit residential density along shorelines to preserve scenic beauty and rural character.
6. The County/City/Town should not allow intensive industries or strip commercial development to locate along shorelines. Neither of these types of development is compatible with the community's vision for the region's shorelines.

#### **Public access**

7. The County/City/Town shall maintain existing shoreline public access points, including parks, trailheads, and boat launches, to support public use and enjoyment of shorelines.
8. Establishing additional boat launches and picnic areas along the Yakima River is a priority for future recreation planning.

9. Additional boat launches along the Columbia River and Lake Cle Elum should be established.
10. Rinehart Park boat launch should be repaired.
11. Additional user amenities at or along shorelines in the Rural Conservancy and Urban Conservancy environments, such as parking areas, restrooms, benches, picnic tables, and signage should be added throughout the region to improve the recreational experience along shorelines.

### **Resource protection**

12. Continue to support fish recovery efforts aimed at increasing populations of native fish species.
13. Explore ways to reinitiate recreational fishing on local streams and lakes, particularly in locations easily accessed by families.
14. Cultural resources located near or along shorelines should be identified and inventoried to prevent inadvertent disturbances.

### **Restoration**

15. Encourage coordination between wildlife and agricultural interest to prevent damage to shorelines from cattle and other livestock.
16. Restore natural river geomorphology and floodplains to improve flood management functions.
17. Create signage or other means of information to notify the public of their responsibility to remove all trash and other items used during recreation along shorelines.
18. The County should support citizen-organized shoreline maintenance associations who will cooperate to maintain shorelines located on private property.

## 5. Appendices

### Appendix A: Open House Workshop Meeting Format and Materials

#### *Meeting Location and Attendance*

The Ellensburg open house on July 18<sup>th</sup> was held at the Kittitas County Events Center (Fairgrounds) in Manastash Hall. It was attended by approximately 11 people. The Cle Elum open house on July 19<sup>th</sup> was held at the Kittitas Valley Senior Center and was attended by 3 people. Meeting organizers attributed the low turnout, particularly in Cle Elum, to competition with other events taking place at the same time elsewhere in the community and the early state of the SMP update process.

The September 12<sup>th</sup> workshop was held at the Hal Holmes Community Center and was attended by approximately 20 people. The improved attendance was likely attributed to the wider postcard distribution and the end of the summer season.

#### *Meeting Materials*

The meeting materials were generally the same for the two open houses and the workshop. See Table 1 below. Two additional materials were available at the workshop: the shoreline environment designation Flowchart and the September 12, 2012 PowerPoint presentation.

**Table 1: Stations and Resources Available at Community Visioning Open House and Workshop Events**

<b>Stations</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Resources Available</b>
<b>Sign-In and Information</b>	Attendees were able to sign-in and pick up a packet of general SMP information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign-In Sheets</li> <li>• Ecology’s SMP Citizen Guide brochure</li> <li>• Regional SMP newsletter</li> <li>• Community Visioning Questionnaire</li> <li>• Timeline of SMP update</li> <li>• Press release regarding formation of shoreline Citizens Advisory Committee (<i>July open houses only</i>)</li> <li>• Printout of Regional SMP “Welcome” and “Contact” webpages</li> </ul>
<b>Jurisdiction Tables</b>	Kittitas County, Cle Elum, South Cle Elum, and Ellensburg each had a table with jurisdiction-specific information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning code</li> <li>• Comprehensive plan</li> <li>• Printout of relevant “Reach Sheets” from Inventory and Characterization report</li> <li>• Maps showing the shoreline environment designations from 1975 countywide SMP</li> <li>• 1975 countywide SMP (at Kittitas County table only)</li> </ul>
<b>Inventory Characterization Report and Shoreline Environment Designation</b>	At this table attendees were able to review the recently completed draft Inventory and Characterization report and learn about upcoming preliminary shoreline environment designations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft ICR with map folios</li> <li>• Preliminary Jurisdiction map</li> <li>• Preliminary Shoreline Reach map</li> <li>• ICR handout describing how to access document and what to</li> </ul>

Stations	Description	Resources Available
<b>Table</b>		consider when providing comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoreline environment designation handout describing existing shoreline environments and Ecology’s guidance for shoreline environments</li> <li>• Poster with photos of countywide shorelines</li> <li>• Shoreline environment designation flowchart (<i>September workshop only</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Public Access, Restoration, and Shoreline Protection and Enhancement</b>	Information on the SMA’s public access and restoration requirements was provided in handouts and posters, as well as maps where attendees could discuss with staff how they used shorelines and where additional access, protection or restoration was needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoreline public access Handout and poster</li> <li>• Shoreline restoration and protection handout and poster</li> <li>• Preliminary Public Access map</li> <li>• Preliminary Restoration map</li> </ul>
<b>Computer Mapping Station</b>	Specific corrections to the public access map were made to electronic maps using Google Earth. The mapping station also let attendees view specific parcels and their relationship to shorelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffed laptop running mapping software.</li> </ul>

*Meeting Format—July 2012 Open Houses*

At the July 2012 open houses, the event began with an introductory presentation by Environmental Science Associates (ESA). After that, open house attendees were invited to visit a series of subject-matter stations (tables) where information on the SMP update was provided.

*Meeting Format—September 2012 Workshop*

At the September 2012 workshop, the event also began with an introductory presentation, which was followed by a large group and small group discussion of several SMP-related questions. An introductory PowerPoint presentation provided background on the Shoreline Management Act requirements, including local Shoreline Master Program updates, and summarized the June 2012 draft Shoreline Inventory and Characterization Report (ICR).

Additionally, all attendees were encouraged to complete the Community Visioning Questionnaire.

Handouts that were at the open houses were made available for download from the Regional SMP update project webpages: <http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/cds/smp/meetings.asp>.

*Public Notice*

The following methods were used to notify the public and interested parties about the open house and workshop events. In each case, notice identified the open houses as being part of the Regional SMP update, and gave the dates, times, and locations of the events.

- **Press Release:** a press release was distributed to media outlets and posted on the County’s website approximately two weeks prior to the events.

[Jurisdiction] SMP

- **Email:** an email was sent to the County's SMP email group and to an email list provided by the City of Ellensburg approximately two weeks prior to the events.
- **Postcards:** For the July open houses, a total of 584 postcards were mailed to the SMP update mailing list and a list of contacts provided by the Kittitas Chamber of Commerce. For the September workshop, a total of 2579 postcards were mailed, which included the recipients described above, as well as all private property owners within the mapped preliminary shoreline jurisdiction map.
- **Website:** information and handouts related to the open house and workshop events were posted on the Regional SMP update Meetings/Materials webpage prior to the events:  
<http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/cds/smp/meetings.asp#CV>
- **Newspaper:** an article providing details of the July open house public meeting events called "County asks public for shoreline input," was published in the Daily Record on July 17, 2012. Newspaper notice was provided for the September workshop on September 6, 2012 in an article called "Shoreline plan workshop is Sept. 12."
- **SMP TAC:** the SMP Technical Advisory Committee was informed about the July open houses at their July 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **Appendix D: Discussion Notes from 9/12/12 Community Visioning Workshop**

### **What would you like to see in the next 5-10 years?**

- Fewer people
- Fewer homes (flooded areas)
- Private property rights
- Shoreline Associations for maintenance
- Less government restriction
- Public Access from public lands
- Better developed public access – boating, parking, signage, trails, warnings
- Wildlife and fish (maintain or enhance)
- Private property rights and flexibility
- Improve scenic
- Good for agriculture and livestock (no buffers)
- Maintain what is there now
- Small scale electric generation
- Clean water
- No litter
- Flood protection, mitigation from flooding, ability to protect structures before floods
- Public access, or pay fee for access

### **What not to see in next 5-10 years?**

- Buffer areas
- Blocking access (requiring payment)
- Housing development in flood areas
- Water intensive industries
- More people
- Commercial or residential development without reasonable setbacks
- Strip malls or commercial development (hot dog strands, etc.)
- No new levies on river
- State agency personnel

### **Values?**

- Scenic and Recreation (passive)
- Walking Trail
- Fishing recreation
- Clean shorelines
- Private ownership
- Maintenance and management of water control on creeks
- Agency coordination: hierarchy of rules?
- Fisheries/hatcheries
- Tribal interests
- Flood control

### **What makes Kittitas Shorelines Unique?**

- What are shorelines? What are Kittitas County's shorelines?
- Irrigation
- Scenic Value
- Recreations – fishing, boating/rafting
- Agriculture

[Jurisdiction] SMP

- Transportation
- Flood Control
- Blockages in River (trees and stumps)
- Rafters, garbage, degrading river (Yakima) – Ken Eaton
- Agricultural uses in shorelines (Monica)