

**Kittitas County Regional SMP Update
Shoreline Environment Designations (SEDs)
October 2012**

I. Background:

This SMP update is part of a multi-jurisdictional update process. Participating jurisdictions include Kittitas County, the Cities of Ellensburg and Cle Elum, and the Town of South Cle Elum. The proposed designations are based upon the coordinated efforts of these jurisdictions, a Technical Advisory Committee and the scientific, technical and cultural contributions of federal agencies, watershed planning units, conservation districts, public utility districts and other institutions.

The system of classifying shorelines is established by the Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58) and Master Program Guidelines (WAC 173-26-211). The purpose of shoreline environment designations is to provide a uniform basis for applying policies and regulations in distinct shoreline areas having similar characteristics. The Master Program Guidelines identify six basic shoreline environment designations: High-Intensity, Shoreline Residential, Urban Conservancy, Rural Conservancy, Natural, and Aquatic. The purpose and designation criteria for each designation are summarized in Table 1 below, which is based on the Shoreline Environment Designations recommended by the Master Program (WAC 173-26-211).

In compliance with the SMA and the Department of Ecology's Guidelines, the multi-jurisdictional planning team has assigned shoreline environment designations to the shoreline reaches within the Kittitas County SMA jurisdiction. The shoreline environment designation process is described below.

II. Assigning Shoreline Environment Designations to Kittitas County:

The Kittitas County Shoreline Inventory and Characterization Report (the ICR) was completed in September 2012. This document provided physical and ecological features, built environment and land use information, and a shoreline function analysis for each of the shoreline reaches identified in preliminary mapping exercises. The information contained in the ICR was compiled into a reach analysis table where the various shoreline characteristics could be viewed together.

A flowchart was developed as a tool for determining the most appropriate designation for particular shorelines. The flowchart used as guidance the designation criteria for shorelines contained in the WAC (see Table 1). Based on the shoreline characteristics identified in the ICR, shoreline reaches was assigned a shoreline environment designation or was divided in to multiple environments when appropriate. The flowchart is attached as Exhibit A.

During initial phases of analysis a Channel Migration Zone (CMZ) designation was proposed. However, after consideration of comments by the Technical Advisory Committee and Kittitas County staff, the CMZ designation was abandoned because specific development regulations for CMZs will be prepared for the SMP, as well as in upcoming revisions to the County's Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO).

Initially, the flowchart also limited assignment of the "Shoreline Residential" designation to incorporated areas or areas inside UGAs. However, the process of reviewing specific shorelines in the rural area revealed that the intensity of existing residential development on some rural shorelines made "Shoreline Residential" the most appropriate SED.

As a result of reviewing the results of the ICR, considering comments by the Technical Advisory Committee and County staff, and applying Ecology's guidance through the Shoreline Environment Designation Flowchart, the County, Cities, and Town have decided to use the six shoreline environments recommended by the Department of Ecology. Environment designation maps have been prepared for the County and for each of the Cities/Town.

A photograph of a local shoreline representing each of the environment designations is included in Section III below.

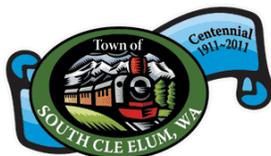


Table 1: Shoreline Environment Purpose and Designation Criteria from WAC 173-26-211

Environment Designation	Purpose	Criteria for Assigning Designations
Aquatic	The purpose of the "aquatic" environment is to protect, restore, and manage the unique characteristics and resources of the areas waterward of the ordinary high-water mark.	Assign an "aquatic" environment designation to lands waterward of the ordinary high-water mark.
Natural	The purpose of the "natural" environment is to protect those shoreline areas that are relatively free of human influence or that include intact or minimally degraded shoreline functions intolerant of human use. These systems require that only very low intensity uses be allowed in order to maintain the ecological functions and ecosystem-wide processes. Consistent with the policies of the designation, local government should include planning for restoration of degraded shorelines within this environment.	<p>A "natural" environment designation should be assigned to shoreline areas if any of the following characteristics apply: (A) The shoreline is ecologically intact and therefore currently performing an important, irreplaceable function or ecosystem-wide process that would be damaged by human activity; (B) The shoreline is considered to represent ecosystems and geologic types that are of particular scientific and educational interest; or (C) The shoreline is unable to support new development or uses without significant adverse impacts to ecological functions or risk to human safety.</p> <p>Such shoreline areas include largely undisturbed portions of shoreline areas such as wetlands, estuaries, unstable bluffs, coastal dunes, spits, and ecologically intact shoreline habitats. Shorelines inside or outside urban growth areas may be designated as "natural."</p>
Rural Conservancy	The purpose of the "rural conservancy" environment is to protect ecological functions, conserve existing natural resources and valuable historic and cultural areas in order to provide for sustained resource use, achieve natural flood plain processes, and provide recreational opportunities. Examples of uses that are appropriate in a "rural conservancy" environment include low-impact outdoor recreation uses, timber harvesting on a sustained-yield basis, agricultural uses, aquaculture, low-intensity residential development and other natural resource-based low-intensity uses.	Assign a "rural conservancy" environment designation to shoreline areas outside incorporated municipalities and outside urban growth areas, as defined by RCW 36.70A.110, if any of the following characteristics apply: (A) 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; (B) The shoreline is currently accommodating residential uses outside urban growth areas and incorporated cities or towns; (C) The shoreline is supporting human uses but subject to environmental limitations, such as properties that include or are adjacent to steep banks, feeder bluffs, or flood plains or other flood-prone areas; (D) The shoreline is of high recreational value or with unique historic or cultural resources; or (E) The shoreline has low-intensity water-dependent uses.
Urban Conservancy	The purpose of the "urban conservancy" environment is to protect and restore ecological functions of open space, flood plain and other sensitive lands where they exist in urban and developed settings, while allowing a variety of compatible uses.	Assign an "urban conservancy" environment designation to shoreline areas appropriate and planned for development that is compatible with maintaining or restoring of the ecological functions of the area, that are not generally suitable for water-dependent uses and that lie in incorporated municipalities, urban growth areas, or commercial or industrial "rural areas of more intense development" if any of the following characteristics apply: (A) They are suitable for water-related or water-enjoyment uses; (B) They are open space, flood plain or other sensitive areas that should not be more intensively developed; (C) They have potential for ecological restoration; (D) They retain important ecological functions, even though partially developed; or (E) They have the potential for development that is compatible with ecological restoration.
Shoreline Residential	The purpose of the "shoreline residential" environment is to accommodate residential development and appurtenant structures that are consistent with this chapter. An additional purpose is to provide appropriate public access and recreational uses.	Assign a "shoreline residential" environment designation to shoreline areas inside urban growth areas, as defined in RCW 36.70A.110, incorporated municipalities, "rural areas of more intense development," or "master planned resorts," as described in RCW 36.70A.360, if they are predominantly single-family or multifamily residential development or are planned and platted for residential development.
High-Intensity	The purpose of the "high-intensity" environment is to provide for high-intensity water-oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses while protecting existing ecological functions and restoring ecological functions in areas that have been previously degraded.	Assign a "high-intensity" environment designation to shoreline areas within incorporated municipalities, urban growth areas, and industrial or commercial "rural areas of more intense development," as described by RCW 36.70A.070, if they currently support high-intensity uses related to commerce, transportation or navigation; or are suitable and planned for high-intensity water-oriented uses.



III. Representative Photos of Shoreline Environment Designations in Kittitas County

A. Natural



Lake Kachess (unincorporated Kittitas County)

B. Rural Conservancy



Manastash Creek (unincorporated Kittitas County)

C. High-Intensity



Shoreline area in Yakima River floodplain zoned "Industrial" (Cle Elum city limits)

D. Urban Conservancy



Photo courtesy of WA Wildlife and Recreation Coalition

Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park (Ellensburg)



E. Shoreline Residential



Photo Credit: Google Earth

Residential development along the Columbia River (Vantage LAMIRD)

In addition to these, the Aquatic designation may be appropriate for lands waterward of the ordinary high water mark.

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Exhibit A

**Kittitas Regional SMP Update
Flowchart Used to Assign Shoreline Environment Designations
October 2012**

