

1 CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

2 1.1 Background and Purpose

3 Kittitas County and its municipalities are undergoing comprehensive updates of
4 their Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs) to improve protection of shoreline
5 environments and ensure their continued use and enjoyment. The update is also
6 required by the Shoreline Management Act (SMA) of 1971 and the implementing
7 rules known as the shoreline guidelines¹.

8 In order to obtain the best value for limited state grant funds, Kittitas County and
9 three of its municipalities (the Cities of Cle Elum and Ellensburg and the Town of
10 South Cle Elum) are jointly updating their SMPs. The County and its municipalities
11 are conducting comprehensive SMP updates in two phases. The first phase is the
12 development of an inventory and characterization of the shorelines within the
13 county. This report provides the inventory and characterization study. In the next
14 phase of the project, the County and its municipalities will update their shoreline
15 management policies and regulations.

16 The shoreline inventory and characterization process involves assessing the lakes,
17 streams, and rivers that are classified as “shorelines of the state” and their adjoining
18 “shorelands” and characterizing the broader landscape surrounding these lands and
19 waters. The Inventory and Characterization Report (ICR) must be based on the most
20 current, accurate, and complete scientific and technical information available that is
21 applicable to the issues of concern. The ICR serves multiple purposes, such as:

- 22 • Identifying shoreline resources and areas that provide value to county
23 residents, recreationists, property owners, businesses, and other
24 stakeholders to ensure they are managed appropriately according to the
25 goals of the SMA;
- 26 • Assessing and documenting current shoreline conditions to establish a
27 baseline against which future conditions can be compared;
- 28 • Providing a basis of information to assign Shoreline Environment
29 Designations (which is one of the next tasks in the update process); and

¹ Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 90.58 and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-26, Part III.

- 1 • Presenting information for future SMP policy and regulatory decisions
2 related to shoreline use and development, shoreline ecology, and public
3 access.

4 This study was prepared by Environmental Science Associates (ESA) with technical
5 assistance from Central Washington University's Center for Spatial Information and
6 Research (CSIR).

7 **1.2 Shoreline** 8 **Inventory Area** 9 **and Methods**

10 The emphasis of this report
11 is on lakes, rivers, and
12 streams and their associated
13 shorelands that are subject
14 to the SMA (see box). In
15 general, the Shoreline
16 Inventory Area is a
17 relatively narrow zone of
18 land and water associated
19 with designated shorelines
20 of the state.

21 Kittitas County contains 50
22 streams and 44 lakes and
23 ponds that are subject to the
24 SMA for a total regulated
25 shoreline length of
26 approximately 680 miles.
27 Except as it pertains to
28 characterizing ecosystem-
29 wide processes, this
30 inventory and characterization does not directly discuss waterbodies outside the
31 jurisdiction of the County and its municipalities or shorelines located in federal
32 lands, such as National Forest and Department of Defense lands.

33 In accordance with Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) 2011 SMP
34 guidelines, this shoreline inventory and characterization is based on the most
35 current, accurate, and complete scientific and technical information that is both
36 relevant and reasonably available (WAC 173-26-201(3)(c)). Key sources of

Shoreline Jurisdiction – Definitions and Terminology

The SMPs of the County and its municipalities govern all non-federal shorelines of the state as defined in RCW 90.58.030, including shorelines and shorelines of statewide significance.

Shorelines are rivers and streams (or segments thereof) with a mean annual flow of 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) or more and lakes greater than 20 acres, together with their underlying lands and associated shorelands.

Shorelines of Statewide Significance include rivers with mean annual flow of 200 cfs or more or the portion downstream from the first 300 square miles of drainage area and lakes 1,000 acres or larger.

Shorelands refers to the lands extending landward for 200 feet in all directions from the ordinary high water line; floodways and contiguous floodplain areas landward 200 feet from such floodways; and all associated wetlands.

1 information used in this report include watershed planning documents, salmon
2 habitat assessment documents, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation basin planning studies,
3 and other relevant technical studies and documents. Mapping information and other
4 studies from state agencies (including Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife,
5 Ecology, and Washington State Department of Transportation) and the Yakama
6 Nation were also used.

7 **1.3 Review of the Draft Inventory and** 8 **Characterization Document**

9 The draft Inventory and Characterization findings are presented here to stimulate
10 discussion among County, City, and Town staff and Planning Commissions;
11 members of the Shoreline Technical Advisory Committee; and the public at-large
12 about potential strategies for protecting shoreline ecology, accommodating water-
13 dependent uses, and promoting public access to public shorelines. The ICR is one of
14 several sources of information that the County and its municipalities will consider in
15 deciding which, if any, SMP policies or regulations need to change.

16 Readers are encouraged to use this draft report to independently evaluate the
17 accuracy and completeness of the data and characterization and contemplate the
18 implications for shoreline management. Comments about missing, incorrect, or
19 supplemental information are encouraged. The report will be revised and refined
20 based on public and agency comment. A final report will be issued in late 2012 to
21 allow ample time for review, comment, and ultimately refinement of the
22 information.

23 Readers are invited to submit comments on this report to the County by email
24 (SMPUpdate@co.kittitas.wa.us) or in writing (Kittitas County, Community
25 Development Services, 411 N. Ruby Street, Suite 2, Ellensburg, WA 98926). The
26 report will be revised and finalized in the fall of 2012 based on the input received.

27 **1.3.1 Data Gaps**

28 As of the publication date of this draft ICR, there are several data gaps that the
29 County, its municipalities, and the consultant team have recognized and are working
30 to address in the final draft. These data gaps consist of the following:

- 31 • This report utilizes the latest-available digital fish distribution and fish
32 barrier data available from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
33 (WDFW), but members of the SMP Technical Advisory Committee have noted
34 some inaccuracies in the data. WDFW has committed to revising the data
35 prior to publication of the final ICR.

- 1 • The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently revising
2 the floodplain mapping in Kittitas County. However, communication with
3 FEMA indicates that the revised floodplain mapping will not be completed
4 until fall of 2013, after the publication of the final ICR.
- 5 • The County and its consultants are currently delineating Channel Migration
6 Zone (CMZ) hazard areas along river and stream shorelines.
- 7 • Limited mapping of existing shoreline hydromodifications (e.g., areas of bank
8 armoring, revetments and other levee-like structures) is available. The
9 County and the SMP Technical Advisory Committee are currently working to
10 identify and map additional hydromodification areas.
- 11 • The County is currently updating its critical areas ordinance and refining
12 critical areas maps. Any revised critical areas mapping will be incorporated
13 in the final ICR.
- 14 • The County, City of Ellensburg, SMP Technical Advisory Committee, and
15 Ecology are currently gathering and assessing data to determine the SMA-
16 regulated length of Wilson Creek, a tributary to the Yakima River. If analysis
17 of the data results in an increase in the SMA-regulated length of Wilson
18 Creek, the additional shoreline area will be analyzed in the final ICR.
- 19 • Key management issues are identified for each shoreline waterbody. The
20 preliminary list of issues is incomplete and will be expanded and refined in
21 the final ICR.

22 1.4 Report Organization

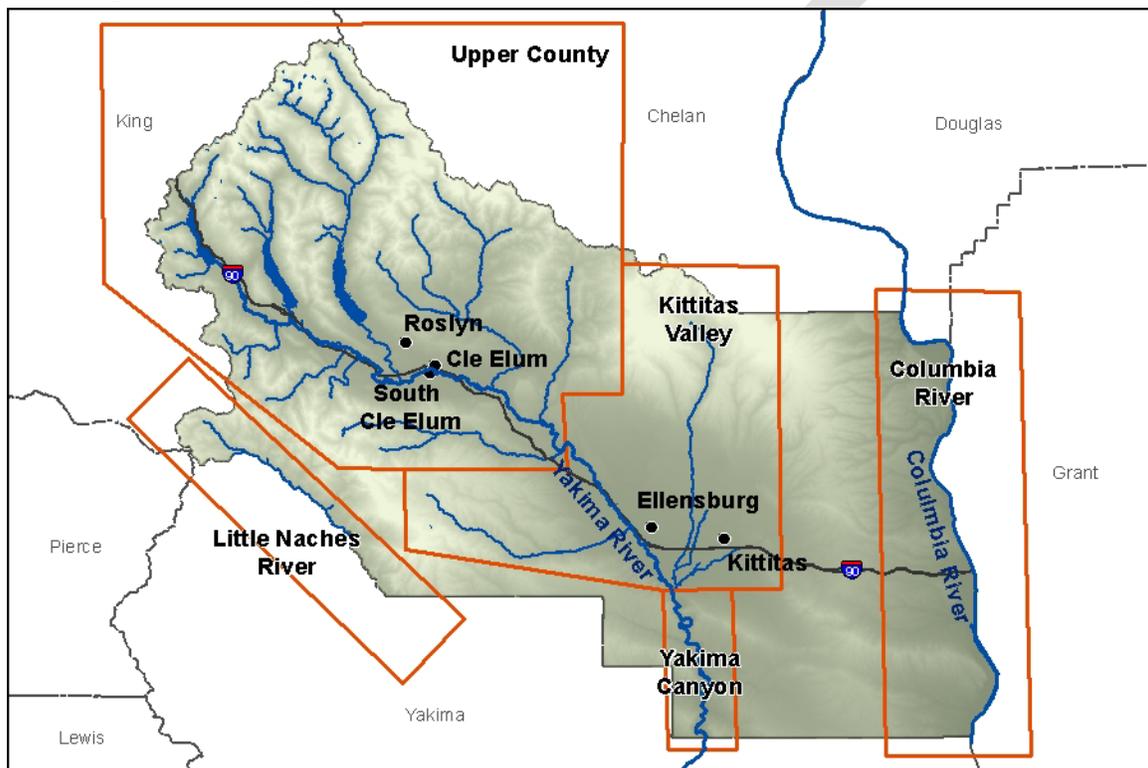
23 This inventory and characterization report is organized into the following chapters
24 and appendices:

25 **Chapter 2** provides the ecosystem profile of Kittitas County and its shorelines. This
26 chapter describes an overview of the physical, ecological, hydrological, and land use
27 characteristics of the county, organized by the three basins (i.e., Water Resource
28 Inventory Areas [WRIAs]) that occur within the county. Chapter 2 also contains a
29 summary of management recommendations for county shorelines.

30 **Chapters 3 through 6** contain detailed descriptions of the SMA-regulated
31 shorelines within the county and its municipalities. For each shoreline reach, a
32 summary sheet illustrating baseline conditions and management opportunities
33 provides an “at-a-glance” reference to accompany the characterization text.

1 Chapters 3 through 6 are organized by river basin and landscape position within the
2 county. Chapter 3 describes “Upper County” shorelines, Chapter 4 describes “Kittitas
3 Valley” shorelines, Chapter 5 describes Yakima Canyon and Little Naches River
4 shorelines, and Chapter 6 describes the Columbia River shoreline (Figure 1-1).
5 Shorelines within the city of Cle Elum and town of South Cle Elum are described in
6 Chapter 3, and shorelines within the city of Ellensburg are described in Chapter 4.

7 **Figure 1-1. Kittitas County shoreline inventory areas**
8 **for Chapters 3 through 6.**



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- 1 **Chapter 7** summarizes the relationship between SMPs and other land use /
 2 regulatory plans and programs.
- 3 **Chapter 8** describes potential new water-dependent and preferred shoreline uses
 4 that may occur along the shorelines of Kittitas County and its municipalities.
- 5 **Chapter 9** is a list of the references used to prepare this report.
- 6 Abbreviations and terms are explained in the **Glossary and Abbreviations** section.
- 7 **Appendix A** contains maps depicting important information referenced in the text
 8 (Table 1-1).
- 9 **Appendix B** contains a *Reach Sheet Explainer*, which is provided to explain the
 10 information and data used to create the reach sheets.

11 **Table 1-1. Kittitas County Shoreline Inventory Map Themes and Numbers**

Map Number and Theme	Content
Folio #1: Habitats and Shoreline Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetlands • Priority Fish Distribution • Overwater Structures • Hydromodifications • Fish Passage Barriers • Public Lands
Folio #2: Hazard Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEMA Floodway • FEMA Floodplain • Steep Slopes • Landslides
Folio #3: Land Cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Cover
Folio #4: Land Use and Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use • Public Access Points • Trails
Map #5: Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning

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