

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background and Purpose

Kittitas County and its municipalities are undergoing comprehensive updates of their Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs) to improve protection of shoreline environments and ensure their continued use and enjoyment. The update is also required by the Shoreline Management Act (SMA) of 1971 and the implementing rules known as the shoreline guidelines<sup>1</sup>.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 1.2 Shoreline Inventory Area and Methods

The emphasis of this report is on lakes, rivers, and streams and their associated shorelands that are subject to the SMA (see box). In general, the Shoreline Inventory Area is a relatively narrow zone of land and water associated with designated shorelines of the state.

Kittitas County contains 51 streams and 44 lakes and ponds that are subject to the SMA for a total regulated shoreline length of approximately 680 miles. Except as it pertains to characterizing ecosystem-wide processes, this inventory and characterization does not directly discuss waterbodies outside the jurisdiction of the County and its municipalities or shorelines within the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area.

Please note that the Shoreline Inventory Area may differ from the actual SMP jurisdiction in some areas. The extent of shoreline jurisdiction will be determined during the SMP development processes of the County and its municipalities. The precise determination of shoreline jurisdiction at a parcel-basis is may require site-

### 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.

specific studies, and is generally determined when development within or near shoreline jurisdiction is proposed.

In accordance with Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) 2011 SMP guidelines, this shoreline inventory and characterization is based on the most current, accurate, and complete scientific and technical information that is both relevant and reasonably available (WAC 173-26-201(3)(c)). Key sources of information used in this report include watershed planning documents, salmon habitat assessment documents, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation basin planning studies, and other relevant technical studies and documents. Mapping information and other studies from state agencies (including Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, and Washington State Department of Transportation) and the Yakama Nation were also used.

### 1.2.1 Data Gaps

The draft ICR was reviewed by the Kittitas County SMP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Ecology, and the public at-large, and their review comments have been addressed in this final draft. With their assistance, most of the recognized data gaps in the initial draft have been resolved by the consultant team. However, there are three desired data sets that are not available, which are described below:

- Several members of the TAC commented that the available fish distribution data was inaccurate and out-of-date for some waterbodies. Updated fish use data was requested from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, but a new dataset was not provided. Therefore, the consultant team updated the fish use information in the report text based upon anecdotal information and observations from TAC members. It should be noted that fish distribution in the County is not static, as fish are occasionally reintroduced, populations expand their range, fish passage barriers are removed, etc. (Mark Teske, personal communication).
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently revising the floodplain mapping in Kittitas County. However, communication with FEMA indicates that the revised floodplain mapping will not be completed until fall of 2013.
- There is no comprehensive dataset of erosion hazard areas within the County. In addition, the existing critical aquifer recharge (CARA) data are very coarse scale. The data may be revised by the County at a later date.

## 1.3 Report Organization

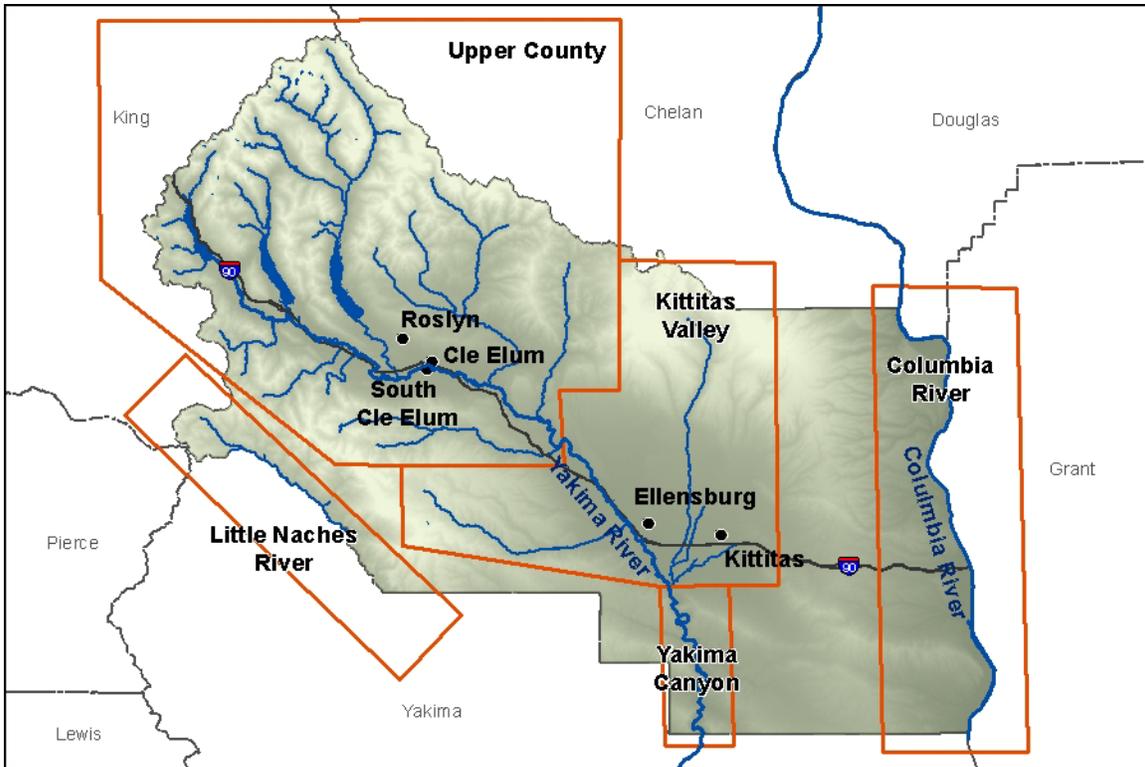
This inventory and characterization report is organized into the following chapters and appendices:

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

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

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

**Figure 1-1. Kittitas County shoreline inventory areas – Upper County, Kittitas Valley, Yakima Canyon, Naches River and Columbia River - for Chapters 3 through 6**



**Chapter 7** summarizes the relationship between SMPs and other land use / regulatory plans and programs.

**Chapter 8** describes potential new water-dependent and preferred shoreline uses that may occur along the shorelines of Kittitas County and its municipalities.

**Chapter 9** is a list of the references used to prepare this report.

Abbreviations and terms are explained in the **Glossary and Abbreviations** section.

**Appendix A** contains maps depicting important information referenced in the text (Table 1-1).

**Appendix B** explains the information and data used to create the reach sheets.

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

**Appendix C** contains the channel migration zone maps, associated data tables, and mapping methodology.