

CHAPTER 3:

Public Participation

This Regional SMP update began in 2006 as a cooperative inter-governmental process between Okanogan County and incorporated municipalities therein. The process, funded with grants from the Department of Ecology, included the formation of a Shoreline Advisory Group (SAG)¹, a Technical Advisory Group (TAG)² and a team of consultants³ who provided the facilitation, planning and scientific analysis required for preparation of a draft Regional SMP. The draft, including definitions, inventory and characterization, goals and policies, shoreline designations, regulations and cumulative impact analysis of the shorelands was done on a County wide scale.

Okanogan County released a preliminary draft SMP for the formal public review process in September 2009. The draft document contained comments from the Department of Ecology and was the subject of public hearings before the Okanogan County Planning Commission during the Fall of 2009. Through the public review process the County received written comments from the WDNR, WDFW, Colville Tribes, a land use attorney and several private citizens in addition to the hours of testimony before the Planning Commission.

The SMP is only part of an entire package of land use plans and regulations the County is updating with no formal timeline for releasing a revised draft that addresses comments received during the public review process. Because of this and the June 2010 deadline for adoption, eight cities and towns, including Winthrop, joined together to develop this Okanogan County Cities and Towns Regional Shoreline Master Program.

A process to tailor and adopt the SMP has been done by the town of Winthrop incorporated as part of their comprehensive plan.

3.01 Statutory Requirements

The Shoreline Management Act, RCW 90.58.130 requires that local governments make reasonable efforts to inform the people of the state about the shoreline management program and actively encourage participation by all persons and private groups and entities showing an interest in shoreline management programs. The act also requires that the local government encourage participation by all agencies of federal, state, and local government, including municipal and public corporations, having interest or responsibilities relating to the shorelines of the state. The WAC 173-26-090, 173-26-100, and 173-26-201(3)(b), offers additional guidance that local

¹ The SAG consisted of representatives from the County, each city or town, Colville Tribes, resource agencies (state and federal), and six stakeholder groups: agricultural, resources, business, recreation, homeowners, conservation and environment.

² The TAG consisted of planning or building staff from the County, each city or town, Colville Tribes, Douglas PUD, U.S. Forest Service, WDNR, WDFW and Ecology.

³ The consultant team consisted of Highlands Associates, responsible for the planning portion of the project, and ENTRIX, responsible for facilitation and the science portion of the project.

governments consult with and solicit comments from all persons, groups, agencies, and tribes interested or with jurisdiction or expertise in shorelines. Conduct at least one public hearing to consider draft proposal and publish the notice of the hearing in the official county newspaper and comply with the State Environmental Policy Act.

3.02 Shoreline Advisory Group (SAG)

The development of the Stakeholders Advisory Group consisted of a representative of Okanogan County, and of each city and town, a representative from the Colville Confederated Tribe, a representative from each of the watershed planning units in the County, a representative of each of the following interest groups: agriculture, natural resources, business and recreation, conservation and the environment. The role of the SAG members is to review draft documents and guide staff and consultants in developing an SMP that will be acceptable to stakeholders as well as meeting the statutory requirements of the County, cities, and towns.

3.03 Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Agencies including the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, the Methow Conservancy, and the Okanogan Conservancy, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Department of Ecology attended meetings to help in the development of environment designations, and regulations. The TAG along with the Methow Restoration Council and the Okanogan Restoration Council provided valuable input on the results of the inventory and analysis. All of the agencies and area organizations were invited to the TAG meetings throughout the process.

3.04 Outreach

Okanogan County has a website dedicated to the news and information for the Shoreline Master Program Update. As the draft documents were updated they were not only emailed to the SAG and TAG but were also updated on the website. Meeting notes from the SAG were also placed on the website. All of the project maps could be found on the website. A newsletter was periodically distributed to the SAG and TAG and posted on the website. Briefings were held with the city and town councils and the Okanogan County Planning Commission.

3.05 City and Town Public Process