

ShoreScore Update

June 2017



Bellevue Shoreline Management Program Update

Last week the Department of Ecology announced completion of its review of the City's proposed SMP. And, last night (Monday, 6/19) Ecology staff briefed the Council on the changes Ecology wants made to this regulatory program. You may have received an announcement from Ecology or the City, if you've been involved with the Update process... now nearly a decade long. A thanks to those of you attending last night's briefing. For others, here is a summary of where we are and how we got here.

Let's start with a brief review

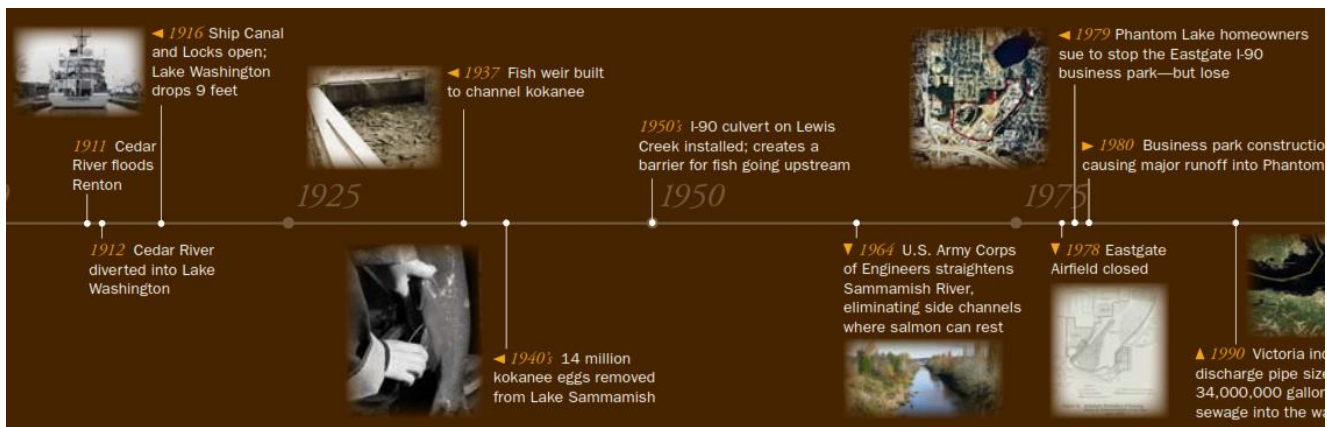
Prior to public involvement, the City hired consultants to assess conditions along City lake shorelines and to propose changes to the 1970's regulations in place at that time. The public input process kicked off in 2009 and was followed by the City Planning Commission considering numerous issues; not the least of which was a recommendation by staff that the Council merely impose its' very restrictive Critical Areas regulations on all lake shores.



The process before the Planning Commission lasted nearly 4 years with WSSA providing key, factual information on the status of our shorelines - including studies on actual use of bulkheads, the needs and status of salmon, actual retention of tree canopy coverage, the degree of development that has occurred, causes of high water levels on Lake Sammamish, and more.

Nearly 50 meetings were involved in this phase of the update process, including WSSA neighborhood meetings to keep shoreline residents informed.

In 2013 the Planning Commission passed their recommended SMP to the City Council. That draft included many of WSSA's suggestions - changes aimed at a balance between property rights and protection of the lake environment. WSSA participated in over 30 meetings, both public as well as meeting privately with various Council and staff members. Our reports, input, and studies were supplied to the Council for their consideration in developing the SMP further.



Between 2013 and 2015 the SMP was deliberated by the City Council. Many changes were made to the Planning Commission's version. Some were favorable to positions WSSA suggested. Some were not.

Items WSSA sought included¹:

- a property owner's ability to **re-develop an existing dwelling** between 50 and 25 ft from the shore;
- credits for **voluntarily undertaking environmental improvements** such as replacing wooden docks with grated decking;
- an adjusted **Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM)** for Lake Sammamish that recognized the impacts of poor maintenance of the floodway in the Sammamish River at Marymoor Park; and
- improved standards for **bulkheads** allowing use of battered/sloping rockeries and repairs.

How did Ecology respond?

Ecology has been reviewing the City Council draft SMP since 2016. Their response negates several features included in the draft sent them by the City Council.

For example:

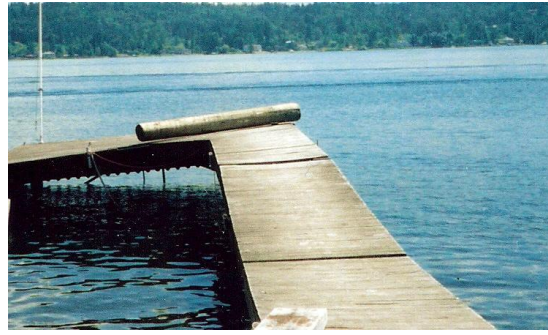
- **repairs to bulkheads would be limited.** Should you need to repair more than 75% of your bulkhead in a 5 year period, it would be considered a new bulkhead. Ecology will seek soft stabilization, unless you need to protect a home that's within 10 ft of shore. Should you believe a conventional bulkhead is needed, you will have to prove it.;



Soft Stabilization Fails Under Our Lake Conditions

- **repairs to dock piles would be limited.** If you exceed replacement of 50% of your piles in 5 years, (even if caused by artificially raised lake levels) you would no longer be in a repair status and would be subjected to more stringent standards and required to report to the City, not just state and federal agencies in order to replace your dock;

¹ Given limited space and time, this ShoreScore cannot report all suggestions and issues.



Mismanaged Lake Levels Allow This And Leads to This

- **dock walkways** (within 30 ft. of shore) **would be restricted to 4 ft.** wide, not the 5 ft. ADA standard that WSSA recommended and the Council approved;



WSSA has requested that the City provide an opportunity for us to present arguments and advise the City Council where Ecology's changes are excessive. In some cases Ecology is rejecting language approved in other cities. In other cases, Ecology appears **not** to have considered factual information provided by WSSA, our consultants, and shoreline residents.

We are encouraged that Ecology appears to have accepted the City's proposed mitigation formula that would allow some re-development activity within 50 ft. of the lake. And, we were encouraged at Monday night's briefing of Council when members Wallace, Robinson, and Robertson challenged Ecology on the issues listed above.

Your Help, Please!

We will keep you posted on the time table of forthcoming events. In the meantime, you can help keep our efforts afloat by a contribution. We ask that you send a \$100, \$500, or greater tax deductible donation to WSSA at P.O. Box 6773, Bellevue 98008.

