

ShoreScore Update
A Year End Report - 2012



Bellevue Shoreline Management Program

Milestones

As the year end approaches, the SMP process is about to shift to a new phase. Two significant events took place last week. First, WSSA submitted a comprehensive summary of its 3 plus years of input to the process. You can find this report online at – [WSSA Summary](#). This information, coupled with the Sensible Shoreline Plan submitted last year, forms the basis upon which we've recommended changes to City staffs' draft plan.

The second milestone reached last week was the Planning Commission receiving the [final SMP draft](#) from City staff. This draft reflects many amendments WSSA recommended over last summer's version. Among the major WSSA points which were included are:

- **Docks** - The City will defer to Federal and State agency regulations for dock design requirements.
- **Shore Stabilization** – The requirement that aging vertical bulkheads be replaced by “softer stabilization” such as using rocks, logs, and native vegetation was changed. A qualified professional will need to determine if prescribed stabilization is adequate protection against shoreline erosion and property damage.
- **Ordinary High Water Mark** – Use of an artificially raised high water level for setbacks has been eliminated. A set elevation on all lakes will be used. [New docks and bulkheads will need a water level study performed. That's State law.]
- **Setbacks** – See the following discussion.
- **Buffers** – A 25 foot “No Touch” buffer was initially required. We have been able to eliminate this. However a percentage, possibly 50% or more of the shore front, could be traditional landscaping (being called “greenscape”), and on the remainder, possibly up to 50% might be hardscape, such as a patio, deck, or walk.
- **Residential Modifications** – We've recommended that existing dwellings be grandfathered and that new houses or expansions more than 50 ft. from shore not face shoreline requirements.

The next step is that the draft regulations will be sent on to the City Council. However, there are a variety of side issues that WSSA has insisted be reported to the Council. Among these are:

- Lake drainage problems continue to be a major problem on Phantom and Sammamish,
- Major contributors to lake pollution which are under control of the City (such as control of storm water dumping into the lakes and their use as detention ponds) needs to be recognized.
- Staff appears to be imposing overly strict regulations regarding floodplains - beyond those outlined by FEMA - which will cause unnecessary limitations on property owners.

Special Subcommittee

Concerns were expressed by several Commission members that there was insufficient detail regarding what property owners may or may not do on their near-shore property (the band of property from the ordinary high water mark to 25 feet landward.)

At last week's meeting, Commission Chairman John Carlson appointed a subcommittee to develop options for this area. A 3-person committee will return to the full Commission in January with recommendations as to when and how much of the shore must be "greenscaped" under different development actions. For example, if you want to add a garage, or deck, or a room, how much of the shoreline will need to be landscaped to compensate for these changes.

Planning Commissioner Diane Tebelius, a Lake Sammamish shoreline resident, who is well aware of the impacts some of these suggestions carry, will participate on the subcommittee. The committee will meet over the holidays and report to the Commission at the January 9th meeting.

Lake Sammamish

Docks See December Daylight

It has been several Decembers since docks on Lake Sammamish have seen the light of day at year's end. We're happy to report that efforts by WSSA and concerned residents around the lake have accomplished this. It appears that trimming the vegetation in the slough and removal of the illegal rock dam mid-stream in the Sammamish River has improved outflow. However, we're only half way there.

WSSA efforts have resulted in County approval of a project to remove the built-up sediment in the river at Marymoor Park. No word has been received when this might move forward, but it is key to the determination of the OHWM (ordinary high water mark). As you may recall, the proposed regulations will dictate how far from the lake your residence and other structures may be placed. The OHWM is the line from which this setback will be measured.

The sediment blockage of the two high-flow (flood) channels has forced the OHWM on the lake higher. This average one foot rise shifts the OHWM line 12 – 15 feet onto properties that have a shallow beachfront. Properties with bulkheads that originally had infrequent water impacts are now being subjected to harsher conditions and will wear out sooner. This is why WSSA continues to argue strongly for assurances that more property will not be lost or setbacks measured from abnormal high water levels!



(River below weir showing main channels blocked by accumulated sediment)

Islands on Lake Sammamish



Sluggish flow still has water levels above average and has caused sections of shoreline to break off and, literally, become hazardous islands of debris; this one showing up in November.

Phantom Lake

Beavers are Bad News

Brian Parks, President of the PLHOA and WSSA Board member pleaded with the Commission recently for help with recurring beaver dams being built at key locations on the lake. This is one of the issues that City Council needs to be made aware of, and Brian has been vocal in pointing this out. (Many of you will recall the recent article on damage in Carnation when one such dam broke.) While residents have taken on the job of dam removal, this carries with it a certain amount of liability, given damage that can occur in their attempts to save surrounding properties from higher water levels.

Lake Washington

Meydenbauer Bay

WSSA continues to coordinate with Meydenbauer Bay Neighborhood Association (MBNA). As part of Bellevue on Lake WA, what happens there is reflective of issues elsewhere on each of the other lakes. Residents in other Lake WA neighborhoods, such as Enatai, Newport Shores, and Newcastle, should be attentive to actions faced by Meydenbauer. If you have not followed issues with this hidden gem of a neighborhood, a central concern to shoreline residents has been a proposed park. In addition, Meydenbauer Bay has been the site of repeated sewage system spills.

WSSA has emphasized the need for the City to be a partner on shoreline efforts. The SMP is to contain what is called a Non-Regulatory section. It should hold a host of actions that can be undertaken by our City to support a balanced shoreline plan. Within the Non-Regulatory section will be language WSSA has supported that calls for continued involvement of residents in design of features to be associated with the proposed park. Similar language has been proposed insisting on actions to correct repeated sewer system problems.

In several instances the City has imposed regulations that embody double standards - one for homeowners that is strident, and one for City departments that is permissive. The Meydenbauer Park expansion and the staff desire to eliminate existing residential boathouses, are two examples.

Newport Shores and Its Neighbors

As currently proposed by staff, Newport Shores would be treated differently than other shoreline areas. Given its construction on a series of canals, Newport Shores' canal properties would not be "encouraged" to replace vertical bulkheads with sloped rockeries. However, non-canal properties and those just to the south of Newport Shores, facing the lake, could be. WSSA believes such a differentiation is unreasonable and, thus, has recommended a consistent 25 ft. setback on all parcels.

Properties south of Newport Shores on Lake WA are constrained by roads behind them. They cannot simply remove shoreline stabilization and put in rockeries.



Your Support

Who would have thought that after three plus years we would still be laboring to assure sensible shoreline regulations? We didn't. As a result our financial needs have escalated at year end in attempts to work with staff as requested by Commission chair, John Carlson and to assure the SMP recognizes the fully developed and urbanized character of Bellevue lakeside properties.

To make progress in maintaining the health of all our lakes, while protecting the shore from erosion and pollution, your partnership is needed. Please make WSSA a priority for year end and 2013, our shoreline property values and enjoyment depend on your financial participation. Without our continued involvement the changes described above, cannot be assured. Thank you and happy holidays.

Contribute to WSSA by sending a check to: WSSA, P.O. Box 6773, Bellevue, 98008

Or

Use PayPal at our webpage – [WSSA Homepage](#)