

Shoreline Neighbors - We have News, the Good...Bad...the Ugly

The Good News First

Lake Levels - We're hopeful that we've passed into a period of drier weather and that a repeat of Feb. 2020's flooding will not occur. That said, we are aware even more shoreline residents have suffered dock and shoreline damage again this year, adding to the millions of dollars in losses this last year.

King County Widens Its View - WSSA was recently notified that the County Flood District (composed of County Council members) is willing to take a more comprehensive look at the issues surrounding lake water levels and flood impacts. This is consistent with the WSSA petition many of you signed in support after last year's flooding. While the Willowmoor Project - mentioned below - focused on changes to the river in Marymoor Park, the new effort would analyze the entire river basin.

Federal Court Ruling Favors Property Rights - A lawsuit ruling against the Corps of Engineers strengthens the argument that efforts to save endangered species do not justify abandonment of flood protection. The case, known as Ideker Farms Versus U.S., was brought before the Federal Claims Court following flood losses when the Corps failed to follow established flood reduction procedures - focusing water release patterns from a dam on the Missouri River solely to favor endangered fish. Most important, we are pleased to announce that Polsinelli Law, the lead firm in this case, is willing to review our situation and provide us legal advice. More can be found here about the [Ideker Farms Ruling](#)

The Bad News

Does the County's Revised Approach Present Problems? - While WSSA is pleased that the County is willing to take a more comprehensive approach to solving lake issues, we must ask whether this will obviate immediate action. If you are not aware, the County is charged with maintaining not just the section of the river in Marymoor Park, called the Transition Zone, but the entire river as well. And, as early as 2002 the Corps notified the County that it was not fulfilling its obligations.

Here are several statements that concern us in the County's revised program (emphasis added) -

***King County Flood District** - provides funding for and conducts regular maintenance of the (Transition) Zone, including mowing, trimming, removal of vegetation, **removal of accumulated sediments in the channel and associated mitigation efforts...** and*

*... (these) **maintenance actions adversely affect water quality and habitat** and are in conflict with federal, state and local efforts to protect and enhance riverine habitat for recovery of salmon species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act, ... and*

*(King County will) ... **design and implement near-term flood mitigation options for lakeside landowners, such as floating docks, out building relocation or elevation and other flood proofing measures.***

We are not comfortable with these and other objectives in the revised County program. See for yourself. You can review the complete list of County declarations and intentions [here](#).

Residents Uncover Updated FEMA Map Error - Perhaps you were among those notified that your property is in the FEMA 100-year flood plain and you, therefore, need flood insurance. (Perhaps you don't have a mortgage, so would not have been notified). One resident receiving such a notice asked why his house, some 30 feet above the lake, was now declared in the flood plain and that he needed to obtain insurance. His scrutiny revealed the fact that an error was made when FEMA superimposed an elevation contour map incorrectly on a map of the shoreline. To find out more, WSSA members met with FEMA representatives and were successful in your neighbor receiving what is called a "Letter Of Map Amendment" (LOMA) which lifts the insurance requirement for his property. But we wonder how many of you had to purchase insurance because of this mapping error.

The Ugly News

Who Owns Your Dock? (You or King County?) - Your lakeside neighbors in Sammamish have been confronted with exactly that question. Sure, you've heard of the East Lake Sammamish Trail (ELST) nearing completion on the abandoned rail corridor. But are you aware the County plans to impose fees on property owners who cross the trail to access their homes AND, in some cases, contends that it owns their docks? What next? We were as surprised as you to hear this, so, to keep things accurate, we asked Sammamish HomeOwners (SHO) if it's true. Click here to see [SHO's report](#).

Closure

Immediate Action Is Needed - WSSA supports the broadened scope the County has proposed to develop a comprehensive solution to lake flooding issues. However, we are concerned with the wording and implications of several of the statements justifying the revised program; not to mention the fact that a full evaluation of the Sammamish basin could take years to complete.

Immediate action is needed to prevent a repeat of last year's flooding. One action which we believe feasible would be widening the opening in the small dam (weir) located in Marymoor Park and adding a controllable gate. This would allow lowering the lake in advance of wet weather using the lake to provide greater storage capacity without inundating docks and the shoreline. That's how the locks in Ballard control Lake Washington water levels. Click here to find out more about [The Dynamic Weir](#) concept.

Our Commitment to You - We are committed to keeping you informed. In that regard, we are planning to hold an online community meeting. Let us know what questions and issues you would like discussed. Contact us at SensibleShorelines@gmail.com

Your Support - We're assessing what will be needed to achieve our goals. In addition to legal advice, and possible representation, support from independent experts may be needed. We'll discuss these needs with you soon.

Your Help - One last thing. You can help us by asking your next-door neighbors if they've seen this ShoreScore. Some may overlook it. For some, it may go to their spam folder. And, we simply may not have their email address. Thanks for your help.