

## Become Involved

If you enjoy using or viewing the Benton County's shorelines, own shoreline property, or are interested in the future use of our shorelines, we encourage you to participate in the SMP update process.

You can attend public meetings and forums, learn about the County's shorelines, sign up for our e-mail distribution list, ask questions, and provide comments.



## Your Benton County Shorelines

### For More Information

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# What is a Shoreline Master Program?

A Shoreline Master Program (SMP) is a set of policies and regulations required by state law that:

- Encourages reasonable and appropriate development of shorelines with an emphasis on water-dependent, water-related, and water-enjoyment uses, such as docks, marinas, and recreational facilities, or industries and commercial uses that require a shoreline location and support economic development, and,
- Protects the natural character of the shorelines, the land, vegetation, wildlife, and shoreline environment, and,
- Promotes public access and provides opportunities to enjoy views and recreational activities in shoreline areas.

The County's challenge is to maintain shoreline ecological functions while allowing appropriate new development and ensuring adequate land for preferred shoreline uses and public access. The SMP will address NEW shoreline developments, such as: land development (e.g. clearing, grading, and construction), structures in and over water, housing or structures within shoreline jurisdiction, restoration, trails, parks and other activities.

## Why update the SMP?

The current SMP was prepared in 1974, and has not been updated since that time. Washington state law requires the County to update the SMP in accordance with the Shoreline Management Act and its current guidelines and to attain state approval. The SMP update allows preparation of a locally-tailored program that represents the visions and interests of our citizens and meets the needs of our rural communities.



### Key Shoreline Uses

- Agricultural
- Boating
- Commercial & Industrial
- Recreational & Open Space
- Residential

### What are shorelines?

Shorelines are special waterbodies that meet certain size or flow criteria in the Shoreline Management Act. These shorelines include rivers and streams with mean annual flow over 20 cubic feet per second. The shoreline jurisdiction extends 200 feet landward of these waters and additionally includes associated wetlands, floodways, and up to 200 feet of floodway-contiguous floodplains. The shorelines in Benton County include the Columbia and Yakima Rivers.

The SMP Update and adoption process is anticipated to take about 2 years to complete. The County's existing SMP adopted in 1974 will continue to apply in the meantime.



Public Participation