

BENTON COUNTY SMP UPDATE OPEN HOUSE EVENTS



Draft Shoreline Analysis Report Meeting Summary, January 2013

Prepared by BERK and The Watershed Company, January 2013

OVERVIEW

Benton County held two Open House Public Forum Events to share the Draft findings of the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update Analysis Report and hear citizen questions and comments on information about Benton County's Yakima and Columbia River shorelines, including land use, public access, and ecological function. The first open house was held on January 9, 2013 at the Benton County PUD Auditorium in Kennewick, and attracted approximately 34 participants. The second open house was held on January 10, at the Benton County PUD meeting room in Prosser where six members of the public attended.



The meetings were advertised through a direct postcard mailing to shoreline property owners, a display ad in the Tri-City Herald, an email to a County interested parties mailing list (those participating in past planning efforts and those requesting email notices in regard to the shoreline program at previous meetings or at the County website), and posters at public buildings around the County.

The Open Houses began with informal one-on-one discussions between Staff/consultants and meeting attendees in front of draft shoreline inventory and analysis map displays, a then continued with a formal presentation about the analysis report findings, a group questions and answer period, and a final

informal one-on-one discussion period.

The presentation included a welcome and project overview by Benton County Associate Planner Valerie Smith, and a review of the SMP Update elements by the consultant team including Amy Summe of The Watershed Company and Lisa Grueter of BERK. Mike Shuttleworth, Benton County Planning Manager, assisted with individual and group responses to questions. Members of the Shoreline Advisory Committee attended both meetings and informally discussed the SMP process and information with other citizens during the open house and helped respond to group questions as part of the presentation.

Materials made available at the public meetings included:

- A copy of an informational brochure
- A copy of the public participation plan
- A schedule of Shoreline Advisory Committee and other public meeting dates
- A copy of a Power Point presentation given at the public meetings

- SMP Update Website address cards
- Reference copies of the Draft Shoreline Analysis Report and Inventory Maps

These materials are available at the project website: bentoncountysmpupdate.com. In addition, a copy of the Power Point presentation is attached to this meeting summary.

Meeting notes are summarized below from each meeting. These comments will be considered as the County proceeds with its SMP Update.

MEETING NOTES

Kennewick January 9, 2013

- Question: Does no net loss start at conditions as they were 200 years ago?
 - Response: Current conditions of the shoreline are considered when measuring no-net-loss. The Shoreline Analysis Report date sets the existing baseline.
- Comment: The inventory is not adequate because it consists of other reports and databases without field review (e.g. a boat tour).
 - Response: The inventory is thorough. The most current science and the available reports, maps, and database information resulted in adequate information to meet SMP Guidelines requirements and to support a planning-level process.
- Comment: need to define “reaches” “breaks” “shoreline” “shoreland” better- needs to be consistent with Hanford. The State needs to do its due-diligence to make the definitions the correct ones.
 - Response: The team will consider adding definitions from state laws and guidelines to the report for reference. We cannot change state definitions but we can try to explain in lay terms the meaning of “reaches” which for the Draft Report merely means shoreline study areas along the rivers.
- Question: On page 57, the scoring. Where did these numbers come from? Are they weighted?
 - Response: The report provides information regarding hydrologic, habitat, hypoheic, and vegetation functions. Study areas were ranked in comparison to other areas of the same waterbody. They are order of magnitude and comparative rankings, not absolute numbers. No weighting was used.
- Comment: the name “River Road” Reach is confusing because there are multiple roads along the river and not every reach is named after the Road that is closest to it.
 - Response: We will clarify the maps and report.
- Question: How do I find out which Reach I am in?
 - Response: meet with us following the presentation and we will find your location and which Reach you are located in.



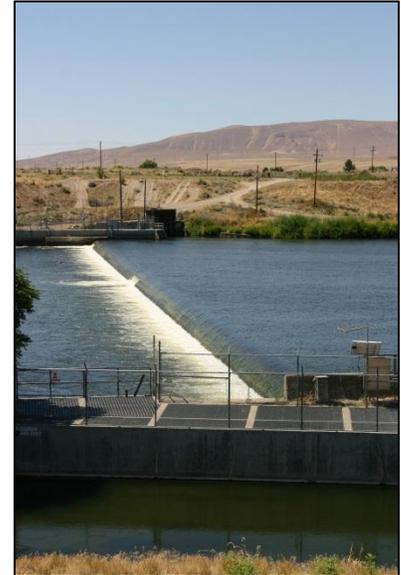
- Comment: There is a lot of garbage around the Hover Park area, it has become a dumpsite, when is the County going to take care of this area? Also, issues with the selling of land adjacent to Hover Park, can't access the park because then you'd be trespassing.
 - Response: The issues with Hover Park are noted and on the County improvements list. These comments can be considered with the SMP Update and future parks planning efforts.
- Question: Will there be a responsiveness summary for each product of the SMP Update?
 - Response: There will be documentation of the comments received and responses, such as thorough meeting summaries and other documents.

Open House discussions with individuals:

Comment: I'd like to see a list of all the proposed changes, and how it will affect me as a homeowner. I am not "sold" on this program yet; I want to know what the negatives are going to be.

Question: If I notice the river shore eroding away, is it my responsibility, as a homeowner, to restore that area- will it come out of my pocket to pay for restoration?

Question: If I provide information/comments on the Analysis Report, will you really incorporate my feedback?



Prosser January 10, 2013

- Question: Aren't there groups around the nation forcing restoration?
 - Response: The SMP Guidelines (WAC 173-26) are specific about NOT requiring restoration or retroactively forcing developments and property owners to do restoration. Future restoration is on voluntary basis and the Restoration Plan helps us identify non-profits and government agencies who are doing restoration now, and future opportunities for those interested to get involved in restoration projects.
- Comment: Just hope no one gets harmed by arm chair ecologists."
 - Response: The most current available scientific information is used, and considered by professional biologists and state and federal agency representatives. Draft documents such as the Analysis Report are made available to the public for comment to allow for input on other information that should be included, modified, or needs additional explanation.
- Questions: Where is my reach? Did you name the reaches the same on both sides?
 - Response: Reaches are delineated by location, use, and resource attributes on site. For the most part the reaches share similar names on both sides of the River unless the conditions on each side of the river are significantly different. In some places the County only has jurisdiction on one side of the river, for example on the Columbia, Benton County shares jurisdiction with Grant, Walla Walla and Franklin counties. On the Yakima, it shares jurisdictions with the cities. After the presentation, the staff and consultants are available to review the maps with property owners.
- Question: Is there a particular lot size used to calculate the future population numbers?

- Response: Yes, current County Zoning and minimum lot size regulations were used to project future population and future build-out of parcels. Along the Yakima River much of it is zoned for 5-acre lots, whereas along the Columbia River in the agricultural areas, the lot sizes tend to be larger (around 20 acres).
- Question: What happens when Best Available Science changes? How does the SMP handle this situation?
 - Response: The SMP, once adopted, may be amended to reflect new findings in science, as well as address issues that were unexpected with the implementation of the plan. Also, every eight years, the State requires that jurisdictions Update their SMPs or at least evaluate how they have been working based on County permit tracking and development outcomes.
- Question: How are the County and cities coordinating on shorelines?
 - Response: The County and cities meet about planning issues typically on an annual basis, but have corresponded on the SMP update including the sharing of data. The county and cities will coordinate shoreline planning within Urban Growth Areas. The County and cities share the same State project officer for the SMP updates, which will facilitate information-sharing and coordination.

Open house discussions with individuals and map comments:

The “Columbia Expeditions” group wants to see more pull-outs on the Columbia River near Hanford, where kayakers and canoers can come ashore for emergencies purposes. Also, need to provide access for emergency personnel to those pull-outs.

Next time, please make presentation bigger on the screen for ease of reading by those in the farthest row back.

Check floodway and floodplain boundaries at Barker Ranch. Wetlands are fed by the Barker Channel.

FOLLOW UP EMAIL COMMENT

Question (January 16, 2013): What is the access to Hover Park? It seems to me that much of the land surrounding the park is private property.

Attachment: SMP Update Power Point Presentation, January 9 and 10, 2013