Ecology Invites Photos of King Tides

Local News

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Olympia, WA - Washington's higher-than-usual winter tides will begin Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2011, and the state Department of Ecology (Ecology) is inviting the public to share their photos of this naturally occurring event.

These higher-than-usual tides are sometimes called "king tides" and occur when the sun and moon's gravitational pull reinforce one another. King tides offer a glimpse of how rising sea levels from global climate change could affect the state's coastal areas.

As global temperatures rise, the oceans warm slightly and expand, ice caps and glaciers melt, and more precipitation falls as rain instead of snow. This causes sea levels to rise and could affect Washington's marine areas by:

* Intensifying flooding, especially during high tides and major storms. * Shifting coastal beaches inland. * Increasing coastal bluff erosion. * Endangering houses and other structures such as roads, seawalls and utilities that are built near the shore. * Threatening coastal freshwater and connected underground water supplies.

In Washington's coastal regions - Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca and the outer coast - this season's king tides will happen from late December 2011 through late January 2012.

Dates vary slightly depending on location. Along Washington's outer coast, king tides will occur Dec. 21-26, 2011, and Jan. 19-24, 2012. In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, they occur Dec. 21-25, 2011, and Jan. 18-22, 2012. The Puget Sound dates for king tides are Dec. 27-29, 2011, and Jan. 13-17, 2012.

Follow these steps to participate:

* Use Ecology's king tide map and schedule to find when and where the highest tides will occur. Go to http://198.238.211.77:8004/climatechange/ipa_hightide_map.htm.

* Locate a public beach by checking out Ecology's Coastal Atlas at https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/coastalatlas/. * Take photos during a king tide, preferably where the high water levels can be gauged against familiar landmarks such as sea walls, jetties, bridge supports or buildings.

* Note the date, time and location of your photo - then upload your images on the Washington King Tide Photo Initiative Flickr Group at www.flickr.com/groups/1611274@N22/.

During winter 2010-11, Ecology collected more than 250 king tide photos. ### Media Contacts: Curt Hart, 360-407-6990; cell, 360-480-7908 (curt.hart@ecy.wa.gov) Linda Kent, 360-407-6239; cell, 360-791-9830 (linda.kent@ecy.wa.gov)

King Tides in Washington: www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/ipa_hightide.htm

Ecology King Tide Map and Schedule:
http://198.238.211.77:8004/climatechange/ipa_hightide_map.htm

Washington King Tides Photo Initiative Flickr page: www.flickr.com/groups/1611274@N22/

Ecology's website: www.ecy.wa.gov

Ecology's EcoConnect blog: http://ecologywa.blogspot.com/2011/12 ... d-share-with-ecology.html