King Tide Season Begins, State Requests Photos

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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OLYMPIA - Washington's naturally-occurring king tides start on Wednesday Dec. 12, 2012, and the state Department of Ecology (Ecology) is inviting the public to share their photos of these higher-than-usual winter tides.

These tidal events are often referred to as king tides. They offer a potential glimpse of how rising sea levels from global climate change could affect Washington's marine shoreline areas by:

* Intensifying coastal flooding, especially during high tides and major storm surges.

* Shifting marine beaches inland.

* Increasing coastal bluff erosion.

* Endangering houses and other structures built near the shore such as roads, seawalls and utilities.

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 2012 through mid January 2013.
Dates vary slightly depending on location:

* Along Washington's outer coast, king tides will occur Dec. 12-15, 2012, and Jan. 10-12, 2013.

* In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, they occur Dec. 12-14, 2012, and Jan. 8-12, 2013.

* The Puget Sound dates for king tides are Dec. 16-19, 2012, and Jan. 14-17, 2013.

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://www.ecy.wa.gov/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 http://www.flickr.com/groups/1611274@N22/.

* Play it safe! While the winter king tides occur during daylight hours, don't venture out during severe

weather and keep a close eye on rising water levels.

Since 2010, Ecology has collected nearly 500 king tide photos from the public.