

## **Grays Harbor County Listed to Receive Grant Funding for Shoreline Policies and Development Regulations**

### **Local News**

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OLYMPIA - The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is providing \$6.3 million in legislatively approved grants to 70 cities and counties in the Puget Sound region to help modernize their existing shoreline policies and development regulations, also called "shoreline master programs." To view the full list of grants: [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/SMPgrants\\_10012009.pdf](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/SMPgrants_10012009.pdf)

Shoreline master programs are the cornerstone of the Shoreline Management Act passed by voter referendum in 1972. Under the act, communities develop master programs to guide local decisions about shoreline uses such as ports, ferry terminals, residential neighborhoods, and public access to waterfront areas.

The local regulations are also designed to protect water quality and critical habitat, control beach and stream bank erosion, and increase flood protection along marine shorelines and shoreline areas around larger lakes and streams.

"From the San Juans to the Sound's southern tip, 120 of the 130 local governments in the Puget Sound region are still using largely the same shoreline master programs they adopted in the 1970s," said Ecology's Gordon White, who oversees statewide shorelands activities. "Yet in the past 30 years, the area's population has ballooned by nearly 60 percent. If we hope to restore, protect and preserve the Sound, we've got to start by managing our shoreline areas wisely."

White said in a budget-cutting year, the 2009 Legislature added \$3 million more than in the last state budget cycle to help local communities revise their shoreline master programs. The additional money was targeted to specifically help Puget Sound cities and counties update their shoreline policies and regulations.

The \$6.3 million will be divided among six counties and 64 cities based on factors such as miles of shoreline, number of shoreline types, population and growth rates. The money will protect and restore more than 3,000 miles of marine, stream and lake shorelines throughout Puget Sound.

"This joint state-local effort to revise the region's shoreline programs is one of the top priorities of the Partnership's Action Agenda to help salmon recovery and restore and protect Puget Sound," said Puget Sound Partnership Executive Director David Dicks. "The old master programs have led to the unsustainable development of Puget Sound shorelines and an outdated set of standards for shoreline land owners to work through. Updating our shoreline programs also will improve Puget Sound water quality and keep our beaches clean and available for our citizens to use and enjoy."

The \$6.3 million is part of a broader multi-year effort to help all Washington's 266 cities and counties with shorelines update their shoreline regulations by December 2014. A schedule for specific counties and cities to revise their shoreline master programs is set by statute under the state Shoreline Management Act.

During the 2007-09 state budget cycle, Ecology provided \$4.5 million to 46 cities and counties across

the state to help update their shoreline master programs.

State law requires jurisdictions to periodically review and revise their shoreline regulations. More than 70 cities and counties, including others in the Puget Sound, are currently updating their programs. Ecology adopted new shoreline program guidelines in 2003 that establish the basic requirements for updating local programs. The guidelines were resulted from a negotiated settlement between business interests, ports, environmental groups, shoreline user groups, cities and counties, Ecology, and the courts.

The state guidelines allow each city and county flexibility to customize the regulations to fit their local land-use circumstances and vision of local waterfront development. The process is designed to bring diverse local interests to the table to work collaboratively including waterfront property owners, builders, farmers, environmental and conservation interests, recreation users, local governments, tribes and state agencies. The guidelines also require local jurisdictions and the state to ensure the regulations do not infringe on private property rights.

Every community starts their update with a thorough inventory of existing land-use patterns and environmental conditions. Once completed, shoreline master programs combine local plans for future shoreline development and preservation with new shoreline development ordinances and permitting requirements.

So far, 10 Puget Sound jurisdictions completed their updates using Ecology's 2003 guidelines including Whatcom County as well as Auburn, Coupeville, Darrington, Ferndale, Marysville, Monroe, Orting, Port Townsend and Sultan.

Ecology has final approval authority for each city and county shoreline program, which becomes part of the statewide shoreline master program.