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Jefferson County Shoreline Advisory Committees Are At Work

Port Townsend, WA—Members of the Shoreline Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) met last week to review issues and options related to how an updated Jefferson County Shoreline Master Program (SMP) will eventually integrate with the County Comprehensive Plan, Unified Development Code, and other pertinent plans and regulations. The SPAC will meet again on Tuesday, September 26, from 10 am to 2 pm at the WSU Extension Learning Center's Spruce Room, located in the Shold Business Park in Port Hadlock.

The SPAC will prepare to review the Shoreline Inventory & Characterization Report. The report is a required step in the SMP Update process and a major effort to compile and analyze scientific data to establish a baseline of what our local fresh- and saltwater shorelines are like today. The report assesses landscape scale processes like water flow, erosion, sediment transport and water quality, and their effects on the ecological functions of shoreline resources.

A review draft of the Shoreline Inventory & Characterization Report has just been released to a second advisory committee, the Shoreline Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), for peer review by experts in natural resource management and land use planning. That 178-page report and a Map Folio of some 42 images are available on the project webpage found online at www.co.jefferson.wa.us/commdevelopment/ShorelinePlanning.htm or can be reviewed at the Department of Community Development office. The STAC provides input primarily through electronic communications and has met only once before during a joint project kick-off meeting with the SPAC in June.

“These two committees are invaluable to the SMP Update process,” said Al Scalf, director of Jefferson County's Department of Community Development (DCD). “The state's SMP guidelines require us to invite public and stakeholder participation, but we've opted to start that participation very early in the process by forming the STAC and the SPAC to assist staff and consultants as we develop a proposal *before* it goes to the Planning Commission for formal public review and comment.”

In addition, Jefferson County's DCD is planning two community events to encourage people to learn more about shoreline planning and to provide input during the collaborative process to craft an SMP proposal. A joint meeting of the two advisory committees will be part of a 3-day event called the Shoreline Charrette Primer, scheduled for October 12-14. This is an opportunity for the public to learn more about local shorelines and provide input on a vision for shoreline planning goals in Jefferson County. A full Shoreline Charrette is being planned for February 2007 when staff, consultants, committees, elected officials, stakeholders and the public will be invited to participate in a dynamic community workshop to revise the SMP. The County is eager to have people get informed and get involved from the start.

Anyone interested to learn more can contact Michelle McConnell at 379.4484 or via e-mail at mmcconnell@co.jefferson.wa.us to join an e-mail distribution list for meeting announcements and periodic project updates. All advisory committee meetings are open to the public.

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