



COLUMBIA COUNTY WASHINGTON  
PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT  
114 S. Second St., Dayton, WA 99328  
Phone: (509) 382-4676

## Shoreline Permits

### **Why regulate shoreline development?**

In the early 1970's, several large developments took place along the Washington shorelines. This development led to drastic and negative outcomes to public use and public interest within these areas. The increased public concern with shoreline development resulted in legislative action. The *Shoreline Management Act* was placed on the ballot and passed by the voters of Washington State in 1971.

### **The Columbia County Shoreline Master Program**

The county's Shoreline Master Program is the document that implements the Washington State Shoreline Management Act in Columbia County. The Shoreline Master Program applies the policies and goals of the state act the unique conditions and features of Columbia County. As the Shoreline Master Program is adopted by the Washington State Department of Ecology, it also has the authority of state law.

The Shoreline Master Program designated all the shorelines of Columbia County as one of the four categories as follows:

- Natural
- Conservancy
- Rural
- Urban

The permitted, prohibited, and conditional uses in each categorical area are based on the designation of the shoreline environment.

### **Which shorelines does the Master Program regulate?**

All lands within 200 feet of streams with a mean annual flow of 20 cubic feet per second, all lakes over 20 surface acres, and all associated wetlands fall under jurisdiction of the program.

### **Shoreline Permits**

There are four different types of shoreline permits: a Substantial Development Permit, a Shoreline Conditional Use Permit, a Shoreline Exemption Permit, and a Variance Permit. Some projects may require more than one of these permits.

- A **Substantial Development Permit** is required for all developments within the shoreline jurisdiction with a total valuation of \$6,416 or more, or any development that will interfere with the normal public use of the water or shorelines.
- A **Shoreline Conditional Use Permit** is required if the specific activity you wish you undertake is listed as a conditional use or is not specifically listed as a use element in the *Shoreline Master Program*.
- A **Shoreline Exemption Permit** is required to verify if a specific activity is exempt from other permit requirements. Review of the plans is required, as the projects must still meet other requirements of the *Shoreline Master Program*. For example, in the case of new construction of a single-family dwelling, a substantial development permit may not

be required; however, the residential use must still meet the setback requirements.

- A **Variance Permit** is required if the activity does not meet the minimum standards for this type of development outlined in the *Shoreline Master Program*.

### **How long does it take to get a permit?**

After receipt of a complete application for a **substantial development permit**, a notice of the application must be published with a local news source. After publication, the substantial development process cannot begin until 30 days after the notice was posted. Given that, these permits can take 31-120 days. Once action is taken on the application, the permit is transmitted to the Washington State Department of Ecology for a 21-day review period. In the case of **variances and conditional** uses, the Department of Ecology must submit their approval or denial or modification requests prior to construction beginning. **Exemption** permits can take as few as a couple of days, as review is solely within our office and our local Department of Fish and Wildlife.

### **What other permits may be required?**

Before any development or construction project within or adjacent to water, you need to check with the following agencies for information regarding permit requirements. These permits may not be required; however, checking with the agencies before development begins will mitigate any possible problems during the project.

- Department of Ecology
  - 509-527-4546
- Department of Fish and Game
  - 360-902-2200
- Army Corps of Engineers
  - 509-527-7020

### **For more information, please contact:**

Columbia County Planning and Building  
114 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Dayton, Washington 99328  
509-382-4676

Please note that while every effort is made to assure the accuracy of the information contained in this brochure it is not warranted for accuracy. This document is not intended to address all aspects or regulatory requirements for a project and should serve as a starting point for your investigation. For detailed information on a particular project, permit, or code requirement refer directly to applicable file and/or code/regulatory documents or contact the appropriate division or staff.