Shore Stewards News

GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES FOR LIVING NEAR WATER | ESTABLISHED 2003

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WSU Shore Stewards Program Overview

WSU Shore Stewards was introduced by Don Meehan, former WSU Island County Director, in 2003 as a project of the Island County Marine Resources Committee (MRC), in partnership with volunteers of Washington State University (WSU) Beach Watchers of Camano Island. These dedicated folks developed ten guidelines and wrote the acclaimed handbook ***Guide for Shoreline Living*** (pdf).

Since 2003, nearly 1,000 waterfront residents, farmers, parks, port districts, cities, and businesses on Whidbey and Camano islands have joined Shore Stewards to learn better ways of managing their land to preserve critical habitat for fish, wildlife, and birds.

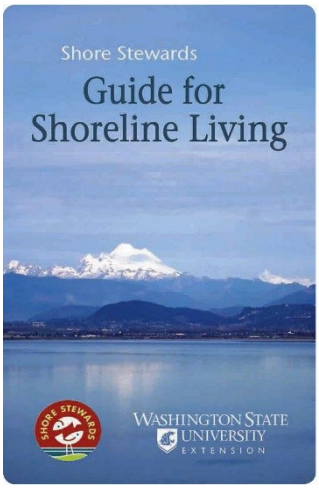
Whether you live directly along the shoreline, further inland, or on a lake or stream, your actions can go a long way toward helping to protect and preserve our way of life amid the coastal waters of the Salish Sea. Visit our **WSU Shore Stewards website** or read on to learn more about becoming a Shore Steward, too!

Why Become a Shore Steward? Q & A

Why should I become a Shore Steward?

Shore Stewards connects you with the right people and information so you can make the best decisions for the long-term health of your property and shoreline. The program also offers advice and recommendations that may enhance the value of your investment. Your stewardship will help make a difference to all life-forms of the diverse nearshore ecosystem. You help preserve the area's beauty.

What do I get as a Shore Steward?



- Ideas and information to help you care for your property
- A personal copy of the resource-packed Guide for Shoreline Living
- Shore Steward metal yard sign to display on your property
- Free email newsletter and access to informational website
- Invitation to Shore Stewards workshops and program
- Greater understanding and enjoyment of nature and your property

What does Shore Stewards cost and what time commitment is required?

Nothing. No fees to join. No dues. No meetings. No required classes. No volunteer commitment. The only time commitment is the time you invest studying the Guide for Shore Living, time spent to make improvements/changes to your property, and if you choose to participate in any Shore Steward events, locally.

Who is eligible to join Shore Stewards?

All individuals who own or rent property on the shoreline, who have property with a stream or river passing through it, or who live in communities with shared beach access. Parks, businesses, farms, port districts, cities and other shoreline property owners also may join. No specific background is required.

How do I join?

Simply fill out this application to become a Shore Steward online and click "submit." It'll just take a few moments. WSU staff in your county will review your application and notify you of acceptance into the program along with a "Shore Steward Tool Kit."

Why Become a Shore Steward? Q & A – Continued...

Once I join, what do I have to do?

Once you submit your application, you are not required to do anything but be a conscientious shoreline resident. There is no volunteer commitment. We encourage you to make future decisions about your property based on our 10 guidelines for shoreline living.

We will also invite you to participate in special workshops and field trips conducted by local and regional experts in landscaping, ecology, water conservation, shoreline development, wildlife biology and more. Participation in these events is entirely optional.

Does participation require me to make changes to my property?

Photo credit: Department of Fish and Wildlife

No. Shore Stewards is educational and voluntary. You may do as much or as little as you wish. No particular changes are required. We ask you to learn about our 10 guidelines for shoreline living. The more you understand and apply these guidelines, the more they will help you make your property attractive and friendly to fish, wildlife, and people.

What if I have a bulkhead or armored shoreline? Can I still participate?

Photo credit Scott Chase

Yes! From low-bank, bulkheaded properties to high bluffs with natural beaches, the program is open to all shoreline and stream-side property owners. If you are interested in learning more about bulkheads and shoreline armoring, contact our county Shore Friendly program

WSU Shore Stewards 10 Guidelines for Living Near Water

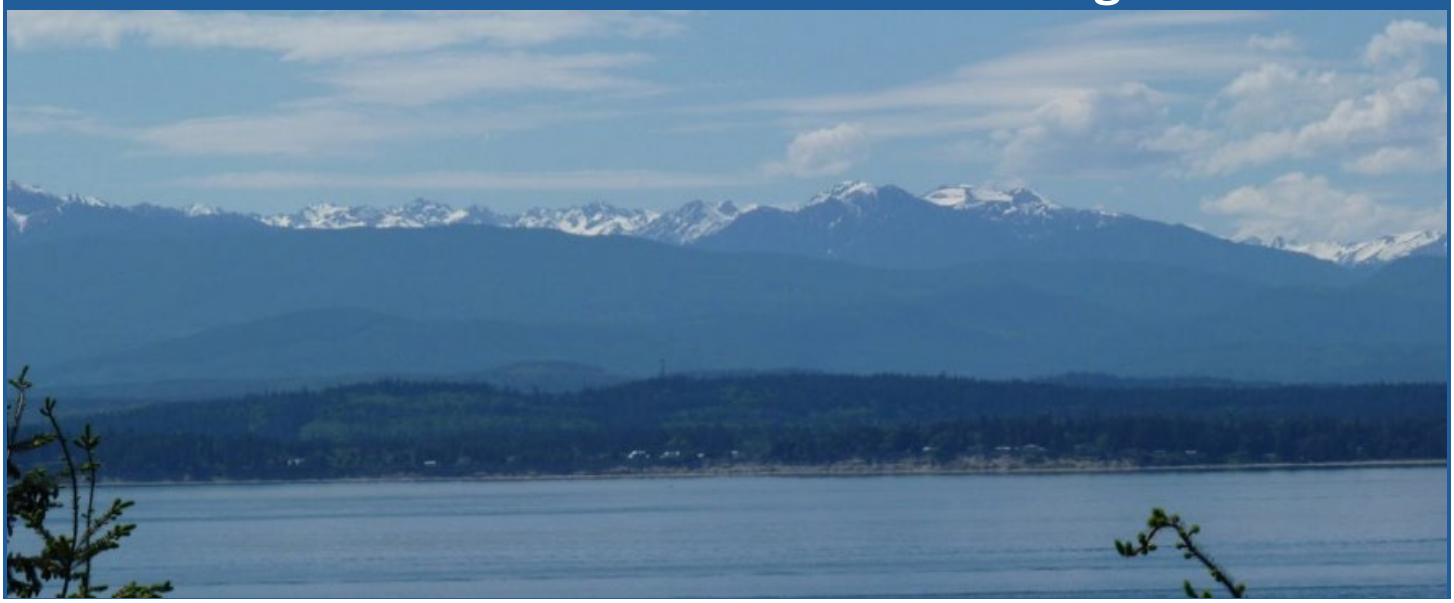


Photo credit: Clam Dinner photo by Betsy Carlson.

Intro to Guidelines:

As mentioned previously, your stewardship using the following 10 guidelines helps make a difference to all life-forms of the diverse nearshore ecosystem, helping to preserve the area's beauty and enhancing the value of your investment. The more you understand and apply these guidelines, the more it helps you make your property attractive to all.

Guideline 1: Taking Care of Waste: From People, Pets, Livestock, and Products

Disposing of waste is an everyday occurrence. Waste comes from dogs, cows, horses, and people. Harmful pathogens such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites from failing septic systems and animal waste can pollute water. This guideline teaches the best ways to keep harmful waste out of our waterways, keeping families safe from illness and saving money.

Guideline 2: Working with Nature

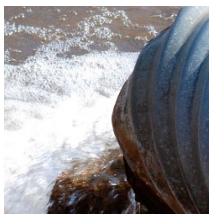
Nature can play an important role in helping you protect your property. By working with nature, you can reduce property maintenance time and cost, provide protection from natural forces, help clean polluted water, and provide habitat for wildlife.

Guideline 3: Making Wise Choices When Landscaping

Landscaping is one of the most important features of your property. Your landscaping choices as a Shore Steward will affect soil stability, fish and wildlife habitat, water usage, and water quality.

WSU Shore Stewards 10 Guidelines for Living Near Water

Guideline 4: Managing Water Runoff

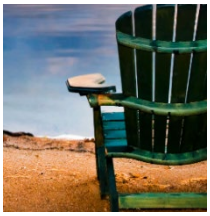


Rain can cause flooding, especially on hard surfaces where it does not soak into the ground. It can also be a carrier of pollution, delivering this pollution to the nearest waterway. This guideline helps you understand the impacts of runoff, how to prevent pollution, and using low impact development (LID) methods on your property.

Guideline 5: Reducing Erosion & Landslides

This guideline gives you a better understanding of how water moves and how erosion occurs, as well as what steps you can take to reduce risks such as using plants and trees for stability, replacing bulkheads with natural solutions, and retaining driftwood, plus native vegetation.

Guideline 6: Living Along Lakes & Streams



As a Shore Steward, it is important to protect the valuable freshwater ecosystems that feed into our bays and inlets. This guideline helps you learn the importance of streamside plants and trees. Guides you on following permitting procedures. Tips for raising livestock and eco-friendly recreation are also included.

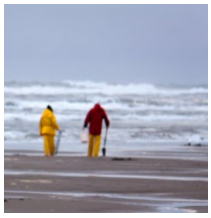
Guideline 7: Enjoying Your Boat

This guideline is full of pointers to ensure you can navigate your way to being a great boater by being careful with your trash, storing untreaded sewage onboard, preventing bilge waste from entering Puget Sound, stopping fuel spills, practicing slip-side maintenance,

Guideline 8: Conserving Water in Your Home & Garden

Water is a limited resource. Too much down the drain and on the landscape is wasteful. There are many ways you can conserve water in your home and yard. This guideline also helps you understand where your water comes from and saltwater intrusion.

Guideline 9: Having Fun on Your Beach



Beaches provide great recreation for humans and are also homes for many creatures. This guideline helps you learn how to enjoy the beach that allows others to enjoy the sea's bounty for future generations.

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Guideline 10: Building or Clearing Land Near the Shore

Building along a shoreline can be especially complex. This guideline helps you with working with your contractor and your local planning department, including the permit process.

Other Resources

Another one of our partner agencies is the Island County Shore Friendly program that offers hands on assistance with property evaluation and answers questions about the permitting process. **Shore Friendly Program | Island County, WA (islandcountywa.gov)**

Links to these resources and more are available on our website: **Resources in Your County | Shore Stewards | Washington State University (wsu.edu)**

Introducing Heather Teegarden ~ Shore Stewards Coordinator

Hello! I'm Heather Teegarden. I joined WSU Island County Extension as Program Coordinator for the Shore Stewards Program in June of this year (2024).I am thrilled to be returning to WSU Extension! Prior to my current position, I worked for four years for WSU Snohomish County Extension as the Sustainable Community Stewards Program Coordinator. I was part of the Natural Resources Team and worked closely with the WSU Beach Watchers (equivalent to Sound Water Stewards in Island County) program. I am based out of the Camano Island office and assist in coordinating the Waste Wise Program. I also work in the Whidbey office, in Coupeville, several times a month.

I grew up spending time on the shoreline of Camano's beautiful Iverson Beach and I am passionate about preserving all of our natural resources and the beauty of these special places we enjoy. I look forward to connecting with anyone interested in learning more about how to be better stewards!

Contact me at heather.teegarden@wsu.edu or by phone at 360-639-4608 or through the main Coupeville desk at 360-639-6060. I am in the Camano Office two to three days a week at 141 NE Camano Drive. Just look for the WSU flag outside the front door! I am in the Coupeville Office one day a week well. Please reach out to coordinate an office visit.

Support Shore Stewards!

If you would like to see this program continue to make a difference, please consider donating to the **WSU Shore Stewards Excellence Fund**. Your tax-deductible donation will help ensure future funding for newsletters, demonstrations at local events, and to make sure that the program and educational materials continue to be free for shoreline landowners and others interested in protecting our islands. **Thank you for your contribution!**

Shore Stewards Events & Newsletters

Upcoming Events!

Orca Recovery Day- Beach Cleanup on Camano

October 15 @ 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Grab a pail, save a whale! Join us and Sound Water Stewards as we clean the beaches and forest of Camano Island State Park. Partnering with WSU Waste Wise, we have repurposed plastic plant pots to be used at this event…youth sizes as well! Play a part in the protection of the Saratoga Passage Marine Stewardship Area home to threatened salmon and resident orcas.

WA State Parks will provide educational interpretation on the different orca ecotypes in the area, how to tell them apart, and the best spots for land-based viewing on Camano Island. Who knows, you might even see a pod swim by from the shore!

We will be celebrating 2024 Orca Recovery Day a bit early due to the tides on the island! October 16th, 9-11 will be our backup in case weather is bad. Updates will be made on the Shore Stewards social media if that is the case. Also, please give a big thank you to our volunteer Scott Chase for assembling these "litter pails" with re-purposed plastic plant pots!

Shore Steward newsletters: If you would like to download or view previous Shore Steward newsletters, please visit https://shorestewards.cw.wsu.edu/news/

Thank you for reading Shore Stewards News.

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