

July 27, 2011

Editor:

As a member of the volunteer citizens that participated in the effort to prepare a revised shoreline management plan for Bainbridge Island it is important to note that this was a group effort that involved many volunteer hours. In the modification group which I participated in I was very impressed with the approach that the shoreline property owners in that group showed. They were not confrontational and they, like those of us that are more environmentally oriented, were willing to compromise on many difficult decisions. In the taskforce group of which I was also a member, representing the modification group, there was also a spirit of willingness to get the job done correctly. We did not always agree unanimously but on all issues with the exception of the actual map of shoreline designations we had a majority vote and on most issues it was unanimous. The actual policy and regulation that developed the map were approved by the taskforce.

It is with a great deal of sadness that I see members of the community and also the City Council questioning the need to protect the beaches of Puget Sound. These individuals claim there is no science to justify regulations on the beaches. I would like to present an example that is one that is impossible to question. When I moved to Puget Sound in 1961 and started working for the Boeing Company I participated in the annual summer salmon derbies. There were over 30,000 fishermen and boats in Elliot Bay trying to catch a prize winning salmon. There were several hundred fish entered in the final weigh in to select the winner. This year, 50 years later Elliot Bay is closed to salmon fishing.

Puget Sound is in serious trouble and the shorelines are a major part of that problem. It is not the adult salmon that use the shoreline; it is their offspring that depend on the shorelines as they feed on the critters in the nearshore areas and the insects that fall out of the trees along the shoreline. We have altered the shorelines so severely with bulkheads, and created a toxic environment with the chemicals we use in our yards, that life along the shoreline is no longer able to support a healthy population of salmon or many other important saltwater species. There is science that is showing us the young salmon are dieing in Puget Sound and never reaching the ocean to grow and return as the beautiful creatures they have become over millions of years. I hope that the Planning Commission and the City Council can see and except the recommendations of the volunteers that spent so many hours on this effort to protect the health of the Sound.

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