

ART WALK

February 25 • 2-5pm

Join us for an afternoon of art, meet artists, enjoy music and treats while you walk, shop & dine in Historic Downtown Oak Harbor

www.oakharbormainstreet.org

Sponsored by

Make a Difference

By Ann Prusha
Natural Resource Specialist Island County Public Health

Those who live on Whidbey Island have a strong connection to the sea. We catch glimpses of it on our drives to work. We hunt for agates among the gravel and watch our children run barefoot into the waves. We walk dogs, birdwatch, harvest shellfish, and take photos of the amazing creatures that live in tidepools. We smell the salty air as we go about our lives. We make important life decisions while the waves ebb and flow and enjoy time with our families while seagulls drop clams from high above. The shoreline is part of our DNA.

Our proximity to the sea allows us to understand the power of water and wind. We recently experienced record-breaking high tides and subsequent flooding. Many homes were affected, roads flooded, and we saw first-hand the effects of rising seas.

Sea Level Rise

According to the Island County Sea Level Rise Strategy Study from March 2020, one- to three-feet of sea level rise is projected as likely to occur for the coastal areas of Island County by the year 2100. Extreme flooding events typically happen as a result of combined severe winter weather and tidal surge. Private homes on the shoreline experience the fallout of these storms: bulkheads overtop, onsite septic systems fail, wells become inundated with sea water, homes flood, and land erodes. Looking into the future, we expect to have storms that are more powerful and more destructive more frequently.

While sea level rise is inevitable, there are programs and actions that coastal communities can take to become more resilient. Reading about them in the Island County Sea Level Rise Strategy Study can help shed some light on community action. You can find the document at www.islandcountywa.gov/PlanningOld/Documents/D_2020/IC%20SLR%20STRATEGY%20FINAL.pdf.

Shore Friendly

The Island County Shore Friendly program is one of several Shore Friendly programs in the region. It is funded through the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program and helps shoreline homeowners protect their properties while increasing habitat value for fish and wildlife. Coastal communities are projected to be especially vulnerable to sea level rise impacts, and the Shore Friendly program can help address these concerns. Since most of Puget Sound’s shoreline is privately owned, our community depends on shoreline property owners to protect the nearshore environment.

If you are a shoreline property homeowner, you can sign up on the Shore Friendly website to receive a free, non-regulatory site visit with a technical expert. This expert will

be able to answer questions and provide resources that are specific to your property. They can help you address concerns such as erosion, land loss, vegetation management, drainage concerns, structure relocation, armor removal, and sea level rise resiliency. The Shore Friendly program helps individual property owners and can also host larger information sessions for entire communities.

In addition to the Site Visit Request Form, the Shore Friendly website has many resources. You can visit the website at www.islandcountywa.gov/Health/DNR/Shore-Friendly/Pages/Home.aspx, or contact Ann Prusha at a.prusha@islandcountywa.gov or 360-678-2347 for more information.

Island County Marine Resources Committee

The Island County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is a community science organization comprised of volunteers. They advise our elected officials on marine issues, educate the community, take part in scientific monitoring activities, and help restore nearshore habitat. Their vision is to sustain and enhance a healthy, resilient marine environment where individuals are engaged, and strive to support life for all inhabitants of Island County. This includes helping to educate the public about sea level rise issues. They are a great resource and provide volunteer opportunities for community members to get involved. Visit www.islandcountymrc.org to learn more.

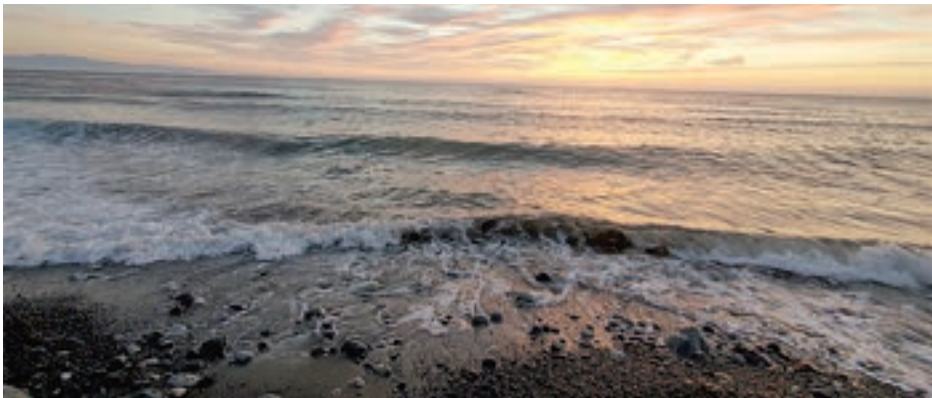
The MRC and Island County Shore Friendly are working together to create educational workshops about managing marine waterfront and resiliency in the face of sea level rise. Stay tuned for more information about these workshops!

MyCoast

Collecting data is critical to helping agencies and organizations steward our shoreline. MyCoast can be used as a website or a phone-based app. It empowers community members to help characterize beach change and the impact of nearshore hazards in order to enhance awareness among decision makers. You can help track things like beach change over time, large marine debris, king tides, abandoned vessels, creosote logs and storm surges. To learn more or to download the app, visit www.mycost.org/wa.

Stay Hopeful!

In the face of the uncertainty with sea level rise and climate change, it is easy to feel helpless. Please remember there are things you can do to help, large and small, as we learn, grow and adapt to the new challenges we are facing. Preparing and planning now will help us become more resilient into the future.



REGISTER TODAY!

WHIDBEY ISLAND MARATHON HALF MARATHON
10K • 5K • 1K KIDS RUN

RUN THE BRIDGE
APRIL 23, 2023

Come run the famed Deception Pass Bridge!

Run for a day, play for a weekend!

The Whidbey Island Marathon is one of the Pacific Northwest's hidden athletic gems and is the perfect destination race. Starting at the famed Deception Pass Bridge then winding its way through picturesque ocean views and tranquil farmland, the courses promise to be scenic from country back roads to waterfront coastlines, snow-capped mountains and rolling hills.

- Tech Shirts for all participants
- Medals for all finishers in all distances
- Finish line celebration with live music

- Customized participant bibs
- Free Race Photos

Learn more and register today at www.runwhidbey.org