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New Features on Smartphone App Allow Snohomish County Residents and Visitors to Share Beach Data with State and County Officials

Creosote pilings, large marine debris, king tides, abandoned boats and storm surges can be reported and documented in the app so state and county officials can take action.

EVERETT, Wash., May 23, 2019 – Snohomish County beachgoers and boaters can snap more than just eye-catching sunset photos with their smartphones. Using a mobile app called [MyCoast](#), county residents and visitors can be citizen scientists by sharing photos to report multiple types of marine debris and track beach change over time. Reports are sent to state and county officials so cleanup efforts can be scheduled in a timelier manner as funding allows.

The free app, which launched in Washington in October 2018, allows anyone with a smartphone to contribute to our growing knowledge of shoreline change, pollution and hazards. At 11 locations across Snohomish County – including Edmonds Marina Beach Park, Mukilteo Lighthouse Beach, Howarth Park, and Kayak Point – users can upload a beach photo from a particular vantage point. The photos will contribute to a time lapse series that will help managers better understand local tidal and erosion patterns. Directions for how to find specific vantage points are in the app.

MyCoast users can also use the app's other marine reporting tools to share geo-tagged information on creosote-treated logs, large marine debris, and abandoned boats as well as damage caused by king tides and storm surges. This information helps state resource managers at the Washington State Department of Natural Resources prioritize marine restoration efforts and understand what the future of our coastline might hold under different weather and tidal conditions.

“By engaging our residents and visitors to be our eyes on the ground, we are able to gain insights about our changing beaches, while users learn about marine stewardship,” said Gregg Farris, Surface Water Utility Director. “The data we receive from app users allows agencies to take action on removing creosote pilings, large marine debris and abandoned boats more efficiently.”

The Snohomish County [Marine Resources Committee \(MRC\)](#) is leading the state in encouraging app use by county residents to introduce them to marine stewardship. Snohomish County Surface Water Management (SWM) provided funding for the 2016 pilot test in Snohomish County. With the start of

boating and beach season upon us, the MRC is using a federal grant to roll out an awareness campaign and help county residents and visitors see their role in protecting and preserving our beaches. The project is in partnership with the Northwest Straits Initiative, Puget Sound Partnership and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as well as Washington State Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Geological Survey and Washington Sea Grant.

Washington is now one of nine states that currently offers the MyCoast platform – and the only one on the West Coast. To date, over 1,000 photo reports from Washington have been submitted, but the MRC hopes to see that number increase this summer.

Interested in joining the community of people helping to document beach change? Learn more at mycoast.org/wa and download the MyCoast app to your iPhone or Android via App Store or Google Play.

About Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee

The Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee (MRC) is a citizen-based volunteer committee appointed by the Snohomish County Council. It is one of seven county-based MRCs, which conduct restoration, conservation, and education projects with diverse partners and community members to meet performance benchmarks. For more information, visit www.snocomrc.org/

The MRC is partially funded by SWM, a utility that provides services to unincorporated Snohomish County. SWM is a division of Snohomish County Public Works. The services SWM provides are funded by charges paid for by property owners in unincorporated Snohomish County. SWM partners with the community to reduce flood damage and to protect and enhance our water resources for future generations by providing customers with services in four core areas to address: drainage and road flooding, water quality, salmon and marine habitat, and river flooding.

About Snohomish County Public Works

The Snohomish County Public Works Department constructs and maintains county roads; controls and manages surface water quantity, quality, and fish habitats; and oversees the recycling and disposal of solid waste. The department's main office is located at 3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett, WA 98201. For more information about Snohomish County Public Works, visit www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks.

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