



# Island County

Serving the communities of Camano & Whidbey Islands

## Island County Natural Resources Newsletter May 2025

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## Natural Resources Newsletter

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May 2025

### Announcements



### Noctiluca Scintillans

Ever seen the marine water sparkle at night? That phenomenon is often caused by a tiny marine organism called *Noctiluca scintillans*! Also known as "sea sparkle," this bioluminescent wonder sometimes blooms in large numbers in the spring and summer months —turning the water a reddish color that people say looks like tomato soup! 

Good news: these blooms are just a natural phenomenon that reminds us how amazing and strange the marine waters can be. According to the [Department of Ecology](#) (see "A bloom of a different color"), "While this bloom **isn't toxic to people or pets**, *Noctiluca* does contain ammonia which make them unappetizing for other species to eat. Also, studies have shown this ammonia can have a negative impact on juvenile fish swimming in the bloom."

According to the [Department of Health](#), “Harmful algal blooms don’t always color the water. An area may be experiencing a massive bloom even though the water appears clear. A population misconception surrounds the term “red tide.” This term is commonly associated with Paralytical Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) toxin, but algal blooms that color the water red are generally harmless to humans.”

This photo was taken at Holmes Harbor on April 30th, 2025, by local Tabitha Jacobs Mangiafico.



## Bull Kelp Volunteers Needed

Looking for experienced **sea kayakers** to help us survey local kelp beds.

A science background is not required. If you are interested, please reach out to [k.zupich@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:k.zupich@islandcountywa.gov)

## Shoreline Community Workshops

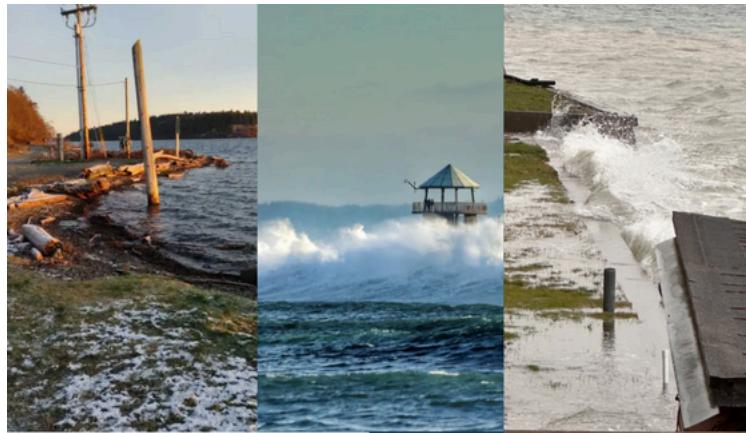
RSVP Today to Reserve Your Spot!

Join us for one of our upcoming workshops focused on helping shoreline property owners protect their land. These events are especially relevant if you live in Mutiny Bay or Useless Bay on Whidbey Island, or Iverson Spit and Livingston Bay on Camano Island.

You'll learn about the potential impacts of sea level rise and receive local information to help you make informed decisions about safeguarding your property.

Don't miss this opportunity—space is limited!

[Register here!](#)



# SHORELINE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP



1:00PM - 4:00PM

THIS FLYER WAS PREPARED BY THE ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE AND ISLAND COUNTY SHORE FRIENDLY TEAM. THIS FLYER WAS FUNDED WHOLLY OR IN PART BY THE ESTUARY AND SALMON RESTORATION PROGRAM (ESRP) AND UNDER AWARD NUMBER NA36AF00001. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS FLYER ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE ESTUARY AND SALMON RESTORATION PROGRAM (ESRP) OR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE USING FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER AWARD NUMBER NA36AF00001 FROM NOAA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS FLYER ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS. RECOMMENDATIONS ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF NOAA OR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

JOIN US FOR A  
COMMUNITY  
WORKSHOP

5.14.2025

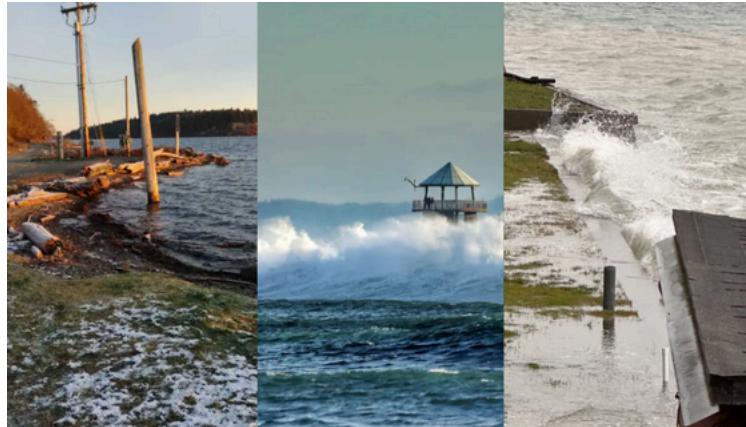
ISLAND COUNTY CAMANO  
ADMIN BUILDING:  
CONVERGENCE ROOM

121 N EAST CAMANO DRIVE,  
CAMANO ISLAND, WA, 98282

REGISTER TODAY:  
<https://www.cognitiforms.com/islandcounty1/communityworkshopregistrationspring2025>

SPONSORED BY COHORT:  
<https://wacoastalnetwork.com/cohort/>

\*EXTENSION PROGRAMS ARE OPEN TO  
ALL WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION



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JOIN US FOR A  
COMMUNITY  
WORKSHOP

5.20.2025

FREELAND HALL

1515 E SHOREVIEW DR,  
FREELAND, WA 98249

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## Programmatic Updates

### New Shore Friendly Program Coordinator.

As we sadly say goodbye to Valerie dos Santos and wish her well in her next chapter, Natural Resource Specialist, Kelly Spirkwaqs Zupich, has kindly stepped into the role of Shore Friendly Program Coordinator.

Kelly has served as the Marine Resources Coordinator for the past three years and will soon be transitioning into a new role as the Shore Friendly Program Coordinator. She brings a deep passion for the marine environment and has dedicated the last decade to volunteering and working with local environmental organizations, including The Guillemot Research Group and Sound Water Stewards of Island County.

Originally from Eastern Washington, Kelly was born and raised on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Her professional background is in veterinary medicine, a field she worked in for over nine years before shifting her focus to marine conservation.

An adventurer at heart, Kelly loves exploring new experiences. She enjoys nature photography—especially capturing the fascinating invertebrates found in our local marine waters.

To learn more about how you can get a non-regulatory site visit to your shoreline home, please visit our website: [Shore Friendly Program | Island County, WA](#)

INTERESTED IN OUR MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE POSITION? Keep checking our [employment page](#)- we'll be recruiting for this position in early to mid May.

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### Island County Noxious Weed Board

The Noxious Weed Control Board is having their quarterly meeting on **May 13<sup>th</sup>**, from 10 am – 11:30 am. Meeting will be a hybrid with the physical location at the WSU (Washington State University) meeting room in Coupeville and Zoom offered for online participation.

[Join via Zoom here.](#)

For more information, please visit [Noxious Weed Control Board | Island County, WA](#)

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### Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen's Committee (SRTCC)

The Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen's Committee meets on the third Wednesday of each month. The work focus is within the Water Resources Inventory Area (WRIA) 6. Please contact our new lead entity Jessica Reed if you are interested in joining this committee.

This month's meeting will occur on January 15th, 2025, 2pm-4pm.

The SRTCC prioritizes and supports salmon recovery projects, provides technical assistance, revises the Salmon Recovery Plan, and ensures projects align with community goals. They act as a hub for salmon-related efforts, secure funding, promote scientific research, and educate the public on ecosystem processes vital to salmon recovery.

Use [this link for more information.](#)

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### Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program



The Island County Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program has been hard at work sampling streams in the Maple Grove, Maxwelton, and south Holmes Harbor watersheds. When high E. coli levels are found, additional samples are taken upstream to attempt to identify the source. Stay tuned for updates and future events, including town hall meetings in the three target watersheds!

Questions? Please reach out to [PIC@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:PIC@islandcountywa.gov)

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## Learn + Act

### House Relocation

More Feasible than you think

Scan the QR Code to check it out!

This design was prepared by the Island County Shore Friendly Program which is funded wholly or in part by the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program and Habitat Strategic Initiative Fund.

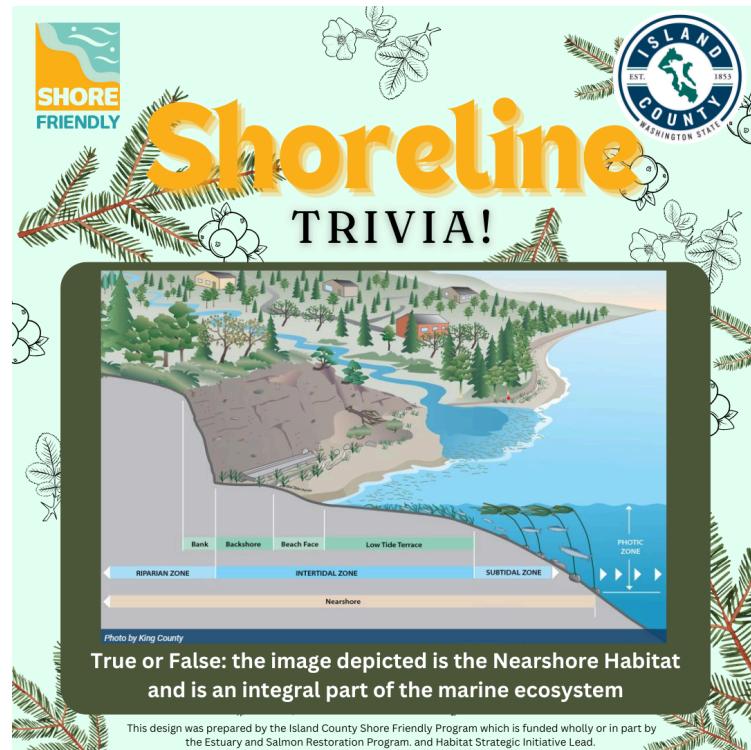
If you are a waterfront owner wanting to know if moving your home is right for you, request a free technical visit with Shore Friendly!

[Request a visit here!](#)

## Fun Fact!



## Shoreline Trivia



The Answer is True! The primary goal of the Shore Friendly program is to help landowners protect their investments while maintaining healthy near-shore habitats.

## Shore Friendly Plant of the Month

Do you have questions about your shoreline property? [Request a visit](#)



Thank you for your interest in Island County Natural Resources.

For more information, contact Jen Schmitz: [J.Schmitz@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:J.Schmitz@islandcountywa.gov) or 360-914-0841.

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