

INTRODUCTION

Lake Management in Snohomish County

Lakes are valuable resources for the people of Snohomish County and Washington State. Many lakes in Snohomish County are in good condition. However, the health of some lakes is threatened by human activities around the lakes.

In response to this concern, Snohomish County developed a Lake Management Program to work with citizens and lake scientists to protect and restore the health of lakes. The Lake Management Program includes regular monitoring of lake conditions throughout the county, development of management plans at specific lakes as needed, implementation of management plans, and control of invasive aquatic plants.

Since 1992, Snohomish County Surface Water Management (SWM) has worked with citizen volunteers to monitor lake water quality in about 25 lowland lakes. In addition, since 1996 SWM staff have conducted more detailed monitoring of the high priority public access lakes in the county.

Monitoring the condition of lakes over time is one key to keeping them clean and protecting property values. With accurate monitoring information, SWM can work with citizens to recognize problems at an early stage when it is still possible to take preventive or corrective actions. More detailed scientific studies may still be necessary, however, to identify specific restoration actions needed at a particular lake.

There are four primary goals of lake monitoring in Snohomish County:

1. to assess the current status of water quality in lowland County lakes;
2. to observe any long-term trends in lake water quality as land use and other changes occur around lakes;
3. to identify specific water quality problems at individual lakes, including

the need for additional studies or actions to solve these problems; and

4. to teach citizens more about lakes and ways to protect them.

Purpose of This Report

This report summarizes the results of Snohomish County lake monitoring performed from 1992 through 2002, as well as occasional monitoring and studies by the County and other agencies since the mid-1970s. In addition, the report contains detailed monitoring summaries for 35 lakes. Taken together, this information describes the State of the Lakes in unincorporated Snohomish County through the year 2002. Data from future years will be summarized in later supplements.

Lakes in Snohomish County

Lakes are bodies of fresh water deeper than 2 meters which hold in-flowing water longer than 15 days (Cowardin, et. al., 1979, WAC 173-201A). By this definition, there are about 460 lakes located in Snohomish County. Glaciers formed most of these lakes by gouging out holes in soil or bedrock or by depositing large blocks of ice whose melting created lake basins. A few lakes are remnants of abandoned river beds; several are man-made reservoirs.

Most of the lakes in Snohomish County are very small or located in the Cascade Mountains and foothills. There are about 60 lakes situated in the populated lowland portions of Snohomish County (see Figure 1). These lowland lakes range from small water bodies of less than ten acres with no public access to large lakes, such as Lake Stevens and Lake Goodwin, which support heavy recreational use. This State of the Lakes report focuses on the most important lowland lakes in unincorporated western Snohomish County.

FIGURE 1 SNOHOMISH COUNTY LAKES

