



Collaborating with the Department of Natural Resources

A FACT SHEET FOR STATE & FEDERAL REGULATORY AGENCIES & LOCAL JURISDICTIONS

As steward of 2.6 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands, DNR's Aquatic Resources Program has a unique, non-regulatory role in the ownership of navigable waters in Washington. DNR is the landlord of state-owned aquatic lands and has proprietary authority. In an effort to minimize project proponents obtaining regulatory permits before they have contacted DNR, regulatory staff need to confirm applicants have received acknowledgement from DNR *before* processing permits for aquatic land use.



Point Whitehorn Park in Whatcom County. Photo: DNR

The unique role of the Aquatic Resources Program at DNR

Like many of our sister agencies and federal regulators, the Aquatic Resources Program at DNR is charged with achieving balance between uses of state-owned aquatic lands and environmental protection. DNR's Aquatic authority is *proprietary*, meaning DNR acts on behalf of the landowner.

DNR's distinct role has important ramifications:

- DNR Aquatics has the authority to deny a project - it may not make sense for regulatory staff to spend time processing permits if DNR has not been contacted first to provide landowner acknowledgement.
- DNR Aquatics authorizes uses through a legal contract (usually a lease) for up to 30 years. As the proprietary manager of state-owned aquatic lands, DNR may require different conditions than its sister agencies or federal regulators.

DNR understands that project proponents are working with multiple agencies in a complex regulatory environment. To improve project coordination, prevent delays, wasted time and effort; Aquatic Land Managers are reaching out to our sister agencies to reconcile conditions on proposed uses. It is our intention to foster ongoing collaborative relationships. Our colleagues can help us in this effort in two important ways:

1. Before processing permits, please confirm that the project proponent has received landowner acknowledgement from DNR if the JARPA indicates state ownership (question 5a)

CONTACT: Aquatic Resources Program

2. When pre-application meetings are called to review projects that will occur on, or over navigable waters, invite the appropriate DNR Aquatics Land Manager to participate. [See our map and contact information for DNR Aquatic Land Managers.](#)

Find out more

Visit DNR's website at www.dnr.wa.gov/aquatics for additional information about lands DNR manages, our leasing process, how we are caring for our aquatic resources and a list of applications (by district) that we have received.