



# Lake Kapowsin

## PROPOSED AQUATIC RESERVE

The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is proposing to establish Lake Kapowsin in eastern Pierce County as a state Aquatic Reserve, which would be composed of existing state-owned bedlands and shorelands. DNR held open house meetings with the local community and stakeholders in 2014. In 2015 a technical advisory committee completed a review of the site proposal and made a formal recommendation to the Commissioner of Public Lands to create an Aquatic Reserve. The Commissioner approved the next step to recruit a local planning committee to help develop a management plan for the aquatic reserve. This committee represents a wide range of interests and met four times in the fall and winter of 2015 work with DNR on the draft management plan.

Lake Kapowsin is a 512-acre low elevation freshwater lake with mostly undeveloped shorelines. The lake's natural character is unusual in the Puget Sound lowlands, where most lakes have modified and developed shorelines. During the heyday of early logging in Washington, a booming town with lumber mills lined the western shoreline of the lake. In the 1920s, fires ravaged the town and mills, and in 1928 the city of Tacoma condemned property near the lake, anticipating the need for a new reservoir.



### Special Features of Lake Kapowsin

This lake has a unique origin: it was created when the *Electron Mudflow* rushed down the Puyallup Valley from Mount Rainier and dammed a tributary creek, flooding the valley floor and drowning the native forest. Geologists place this mudflow at approximately 500 years ago, and many of the stumps from this ancient forest remain in the lake, now a legacy of the geologic event. Scientists have studied the tree rings from the stumps as part of the primary evidence for this fascinating story.

### What is a state Aquatic Reserve?

Aquatic Reserves are state-owned aquatic lands designated to protect important native ecosystems.

DNR's **Aquatic Reserves Program** ensures environmental protection of these lands through preservation, restoration and enhancement activities, and adaptive management practices.

The program also encourages public use and access, provides for greater public input into conservation management, and works with stakeholders, citizens, Tribal, federal, local and other state governments to help develop and implement site-specific management plans.

Designation of an aquatic reserve does not affect recreational fishing and hunting.

#### CONTACTS:

Birdie Davenport | Aquatic Reserves Manager | 360-902-1073 | [roberta.davenport.dnr.wa.gov](mailto:roberta.davenport.dnr.wa.gov)  
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

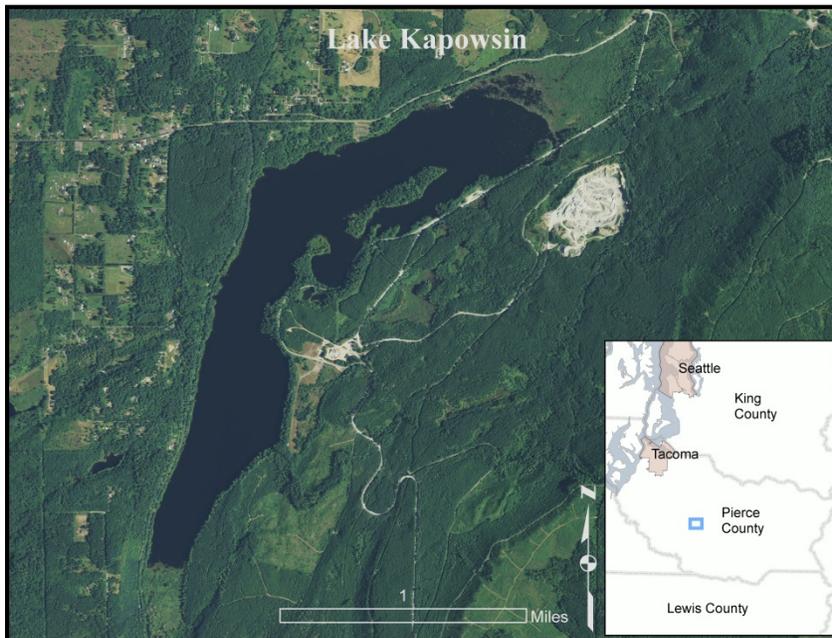
## Special Features of Lake Kapowsin Continued

The large amount of wood and stumps in the lake provide valuable habitat for fish, amphibians, as well as, the invertebrate species that supply their diet. The lake is popular with fisherman and supports a range of native and stocked sport fish. These species include coho, steelhead, and cutthroat salmon; rainbow trout, largemouth bass, yellow perch, rock bass, black crappie, bluegill, pumpkin seed sunfish, and bullhead catfish. In addition, the lake's extensive wetlands provide habitat for many small mammals and amphibians, including Northwest salamander, red-legged frog, rough skinned newt and chorus frog.

## Next Steps in the Process

Community and stakeholder participants helped develop the draft management plan (fall and winter, 2015-16.) A public meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2016 in Graham. After the meeting, the plan will be submitted for State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) permit review with additional public review. Following this process, the Commissioner of Public Lands will evaluate the plan. If the designation is approved, Lake Kapowsin will be the first freshwater aquatic reserve managed by DNR.

DNR is working to develop partnerships with adjacent landowners and land managers for conservation, restoration and enhancement, and low impact recreational access.



## Goals for the Lake Kapowsin Aquatic Reserve

- Conserve and enhance these native habitats, and protect and restore the functions and natural processes of this freshwater lowland lake and associated wetlands.
- Preserve existing low impact public use and enjoyment of the lake, such as fishing.
- Promote stewardship of riparian and aquatic habitats and species by providing education and outreach opportunities, and coordinating with resource managers, neighboring landowners, Tribal agencies, angler groups and non-governmental organizations.
- Protect opportunities for scientific research such as geologic investigations of the lake's origins and tree ring evidence.

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FS-14008 PRINTED 4/2016