

DEVELOPMENT NEAR MARINE AREAS

Photo Credit: Rich Duncan

What are Marine Shorelines?

Marine shorelines encompass a variety of marine influenced ecosystems including the ocean, sensitive seagrass meadows, marshes and intertidal areas such as mudflats, beaches and rocky shorelines that link terrestrial and marine environments.

Why do we care about Marine Shorelines?

Estuary, intertidal and shoreline areas are some of the most biologically diverse habitats in the world. The drastic changes in salinity and moisture make it a challenging and competitive place to live. Eelgrass and channels within the estuary offer crucial hiding places and transition zones for out-migrating juvenile salmon, while shorelines at large provide critical grazing habitat for birds and wildlife.

The Rules

Within the District of Squamish, Marine Shorelines are managed under Development Permit Area 1 (DPA 1) which protects the natural environment. Specifically, these guidelines apply to Howe Sound, the Central Channel of the Squamish Estuary, Crescent Slough, Cattermole Slough and Mamquam (and Upper Mamquam) Blind Channel. The federal *Fisheries Act* also applies to marine and tidally influenced areas.

If Your Project is... a residential, commercial or industrial activity **within 15 m** of one of the

aforementioned watercourses, **AND you are planning ANY of the following:**

- Altering vegetation or disturbing soils,
- Constructing buildings or structures,
- Creating hard surfaces, such as pavement, or
- Subdividing land

... a municipal Development Permit and a review by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) may be required. These applications require a Shoreline Assessment or Bio-Inventory.

Shoreline Assessments (or Bio-Inventories) are conducted by a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) and are used to determine a suitable design and location for proposed development.

Exemptions: Some activities may be exempt. For example, maintaining existing uses, renovations on an existing footprint, or removal of hazard trees and invasive species under the guidance of a QEP.

Have a question? Contact Karlene Loudon, QEP, RPBio, Principal Consultant + Biologist, CoastRange Environmental Ltd., Squamish, BC, at 604-815-3639 or kloudon@coastrangeenvironmental.ca