Anne Sherwood

My name is Anne Sherwood, I'm 53, and I've lived in northeast Seattle for 35 years.

When my family moved to the Northwest (from California's San Fernando Valley in 1990), I thought we had moved to some magical land where old mossy trees and abundant bodies of water would forever provide beauty, peace, and wellness. I instantly fell in love with Washington State, and now could not imagine being happy anywhere else.

The places that bring the most peace for me, and I'm sure I have company here, are those along the shoreline. The ribbons of sand or rock or vegetation that coexist alongside the tiding or crashing or lapping water of Puget Sound. These areas are absolute treasures for our state. For us humans of course, for our mental and physical health, but also for the thousands of other species that rely on shoreline or near-shore habitat to survive.

As there are many who speak for the health and well-being of people, as there should be, there are not so many who speak for those who have no voice in which to advocate for themselves or their children. We see a beautiful bird on the beach or in the water, and she brings us a moment of joy, and then we leave without another thought about her struggle to survive and find food for her babies.

I follow news of extinctions around the world, and do what I can to support organizations who work hard to prevent them. I volunteer for Birds Connect Seattle, our local bird conservation organization, and for Woodland Park Zoo on their amphibian project. Most bird species are dwindling in populations, but shoreline birds are especially vulnerable. They need all the help they can get from those of us in charge of the places they live.

It's hard to know how I can be most effective in advocating for other species, so I learn what I can, and speak up when it may be of help. In my own community, I've started a Nature with Neighbors group in an attempt to connect our neighborhood with nature in ways that are mutually beneficial. What I'm seeing is that people do care about the loss of nature near and far, but they just don't know what to do about it.

I learned about the Shoreline Management Act through one of the many conservation-related email newsletters I'm subscribed to. When opportunities to provide public comment arise or are encouraged, I do my best to understand the policy or issue before devising a comment. I read through the Summary of Proposed SMA Rule Amendments by Revision Type, and though I'm certainly no expert on any of it, I feel I should still express my support for as much shoreline protection as is possible.

When considering how to manage sea level rise, please consider all species affected, like shorebirds who are most at risk of extinction. Restoration efforts should be designed with animal habitat in mind as well as mitigating sea level rise to protect humans.

Please be especially protective of shorelines from all forms of development. Habitat loss is the number one reason threatening many species with extinction. They simply cannot afford to lose any more habitat so that humans have more places to vacation.

Please implement as many nature-bases solutions as possible, for instance restoring natural shoreline instead of armoring. Nature-based solutions benefit multiple species, both plants and animals. Also please ensure private property owners also maintain their shoreline area in as natural a way as possible, for instance with native plants instead of lawns that runoff pesticides and fertilizers into the water.

"No net loss of shoreline ecological functioning" was mentioned a few times, and I might take this one step further to have the goal of restoring degraded areas so that in fact there will be a net gain of shoreline ecological functioning in the coming decades. We can dream big.

Nature didn't need our help to survive for the few billion years it took to get to the beautiful way it is today. But because of the damage we've done over the last 200 years, nature needs us now to survive. Please take any measures to ensure we're doing all we can to keep our Puget Sound shorelines healthy and thriving.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Shoreline Management Act!