



BROCHURE # 32

BULKHEAD ALTERNATIVES



Go Natural

- If the nearshore area is left natural, you'll have a healthier beach.
- Your access to the water is easier if the beach is not bulkheaded.
- Resist the temptation to clear your site before the issuance of a building permit.
- Use groundwater and vegetation management to help maintain soil, serve as water drains, create erosion prevention barriers and absorb excess water from soils.
- Plant fast-growing, erosion-resistant plants to help stabilize eroding areas, while maintaining important habitat.
- Replenish the beach with gravel and sand to help reduce wave action.
- Drift logs provide habitat, help reduce erosion and prevent the need for a bulkhead.
- Scientists have found that bulkheads and other hard shoreline structures destroy or degrade fish and wildlife habitat.



Learn About Your Land

- Check county maps for information about your shoreline, especially about the potential for flooding, erosion, slope stability and nearshore habitat.
- Consider hiring a geologist to provide a site-specific assessment of site stability and erosion potential.
- Join a neighborhood group or volunteer with a stewardship group where you can learn more about the shoreline.
- Visit the [Shore Friendly Kitsap website](http://www.kitsapgov.com/dcd/) for more information about natural shorelines and resources for shoreline landowners.

Bulkheads Don't Stop Slides

Bulkheads do little to prevent sliding of the upper nearshore area. They simply can't withstand the sheer force of a saturated sliding hillside.

Increased Erosion

Bulkheads don't prevent the beach from eroding. In fact, when waves hit a bulkhead, they scour out the beach's natural sand, gravel and rock. This sets up a chain reaction that can affect nearby beaches.

Build Smart

- Site your home as far back from the water as possible to prevent erosion concerns and expenses for bulkheads, seawalls and other shoreline armoring.
- Move or replace threatened structures such as stairways or decks.

Effective Alternatives

Bulkheads can only be permitted when necessary to protect an existing residence, and when alternative protection measures don't work for the site. Natural shorelines, or soft armoring techniques, may also work for your land, and could be easier to permit.

There are several proven ways to protect your property and prevent beach erosion. Ask questions and check with the Kitsap County Department of Community Development.