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Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference

2016 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference
(Vancouver, BC)

Jan 1st, 12:00 AM - 12:00 AM

Creating a Culture of Shoreline Stewardship in Puget Sound

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Bates, Erica and Simmons, Robert C., "Creating a Culture of Shoreline Stewardship in Puget Sound" (2016). *Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference*. 15.

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Creating a Culture of Shoreline Stewardship in Puget Sound

Shore Stewards Program

The Shore Stewards program was developed by Washington State University Extension from the ground up with an emphasis on community-based marine shoreline protection. It is a voluntary, educational program that encourages shoreline residents to learn about 10 guidelines for shoreline living and apply them to their property. Shore Stewards are also invited to participate in special workshops and field trips conducted by local and regional experts in landscaping, septic system maintenance, ecology, water conservation, shoreline development, wildlife biology, and more.

The Shore Stewards program is primarily grant-funded and is currently supported in six counties around Puget Sound: Clallam, Island, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, and Skagit. During the most recent assessment in 2015 there were 2,776 members across all participating counties.

The 10 Guidelines for Shoreline Living were developed to address the most important local and regional issues affecting the health of the nearshore ecosystem. Shore Stewards are asked to learn the guidelines, but no particular changes are required as the program is educational and voluntary.

10 Guidelines for Shoreline Living

1. Taking care of waste: from people, pets, livestock, and products
2. Working with nature
3. Making wise choices when landscaping
4. Managing water runoff
5. Reducing erosion and landslides
6. Living along lakes and streams
7. Enjoying your boat
8. Conserving water in your home and garden
9. Having fun on your beach
10. Building or clearing land near the shore

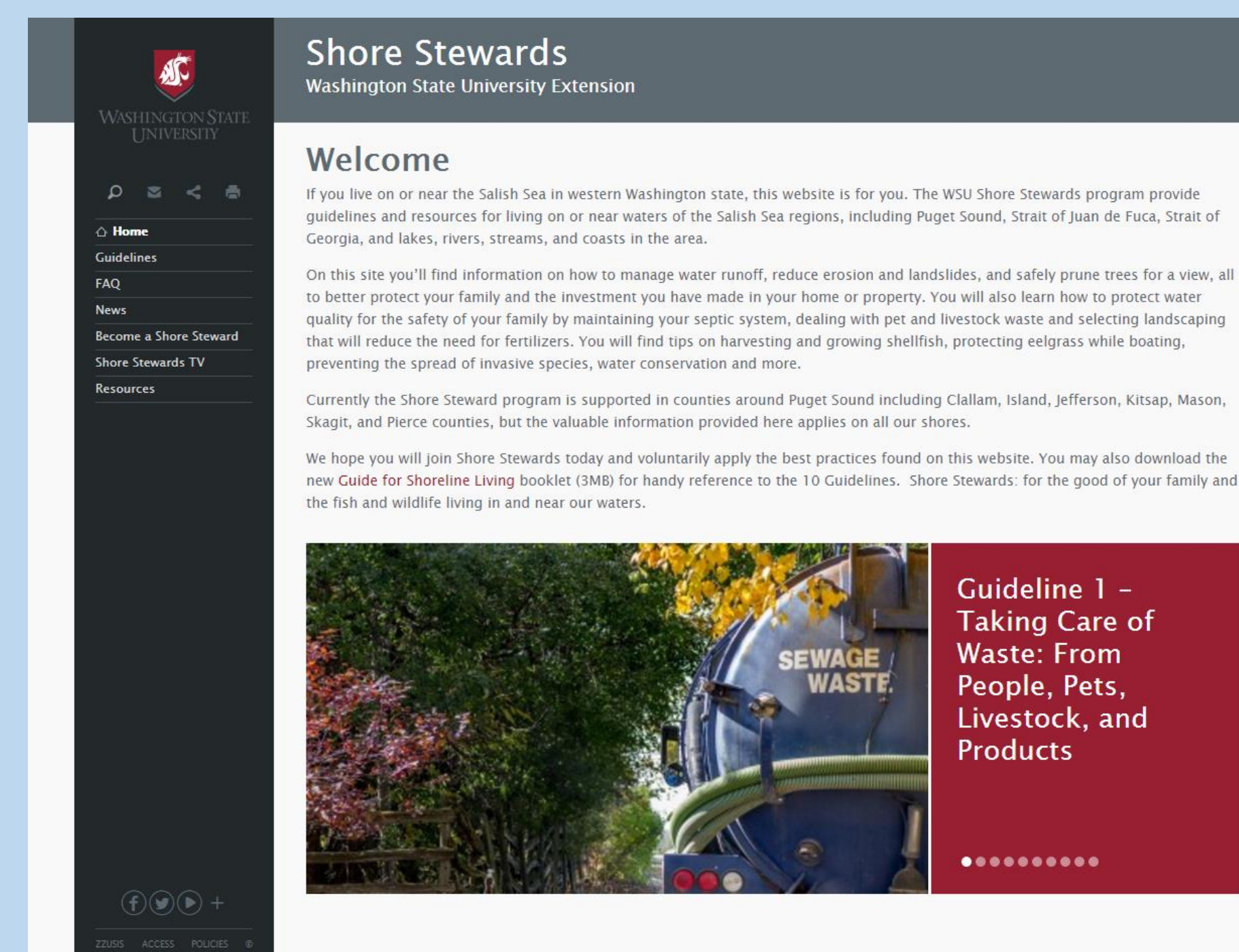


Shore Steward Jim Turner displaying his yard sign that indicates the commitment to the 10 guidelines for shoreline living.

Educational Materials

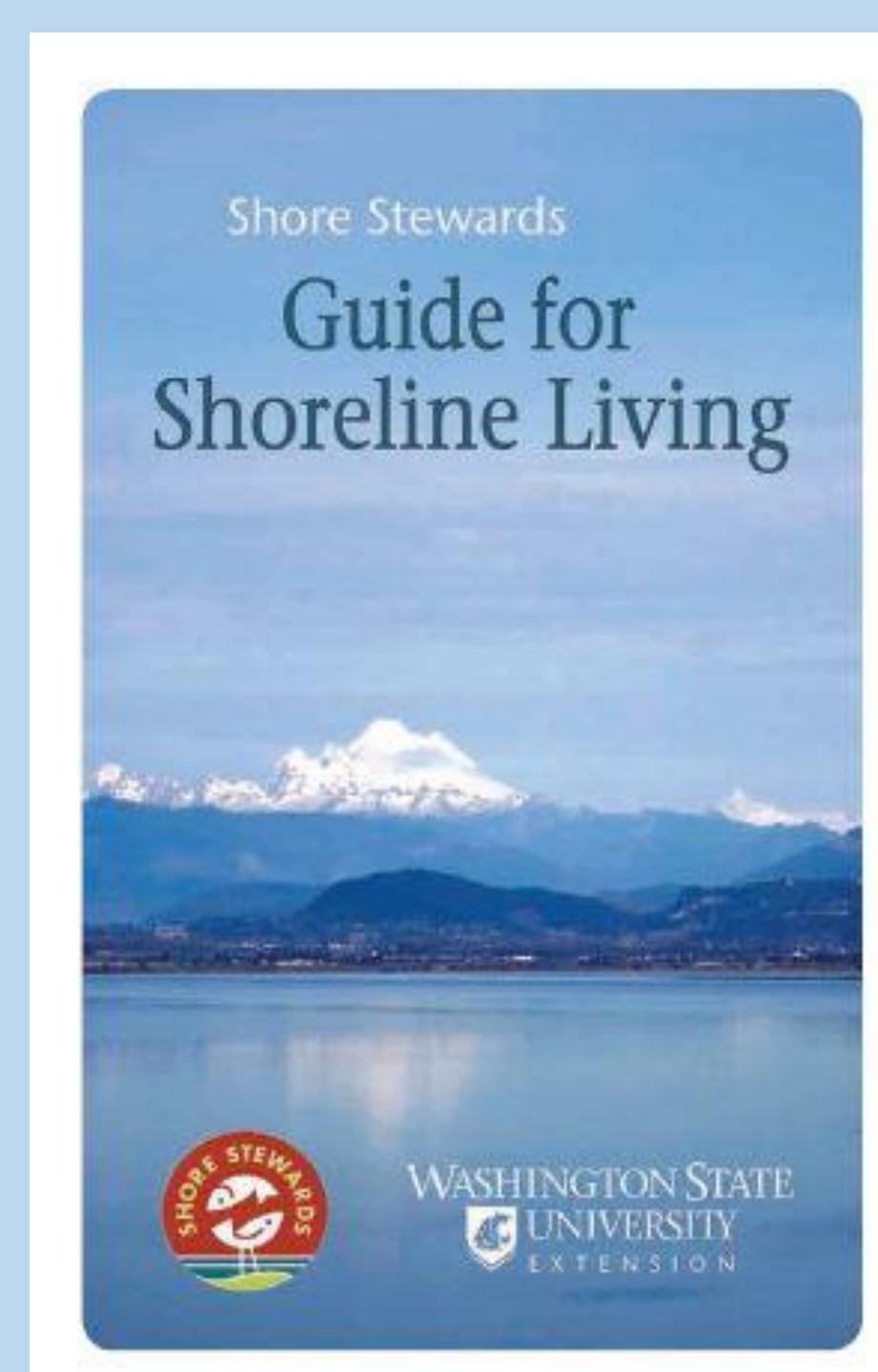
In 2015, WSU re-developed its peer reviewed program materials, including a new website (shorestewards.wsu.edu), a revised “Guide for Shoreline Living”, and a DVD containing multiple videos that provide specific information on the 10 Guidelines for Shoreline Living.

Shore Stewards website, 2015 update.

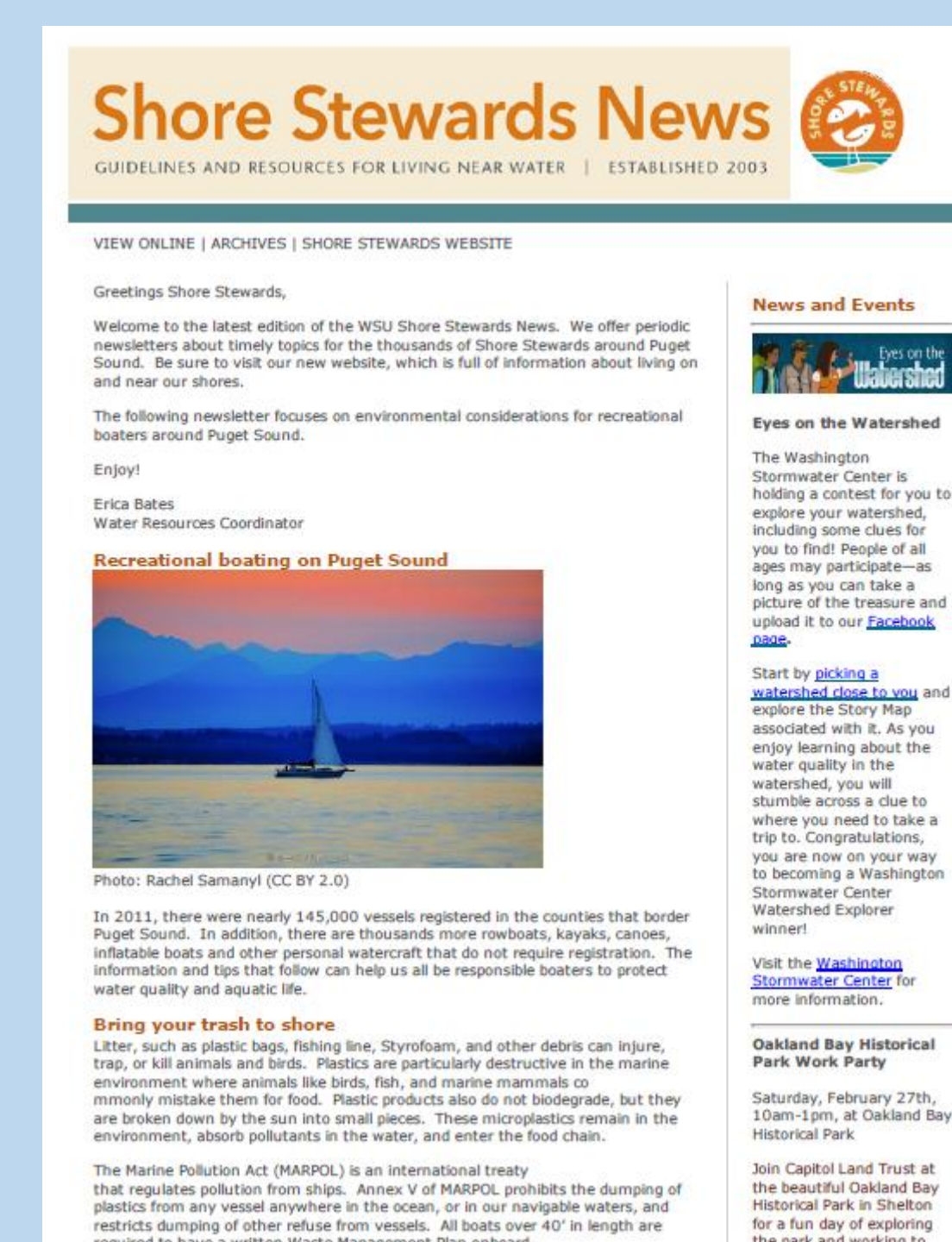


The website provides a single access point for Shore Stewards throughout the Puget Sound region to educational information on the 10 Guidelines, videos, links to local resources in each county, and an easy enrollment form for new Shore Stewards.

In addition, a bi-monthly “Shore Stewards News” is produced with articles on timely topics and also provides information about local Shore Stewards events and programs. Past issues of “Shore Stewards News” are archived on the website.



The newly re-developed Guide for Shoreline Living is available to all Shore Stewards.

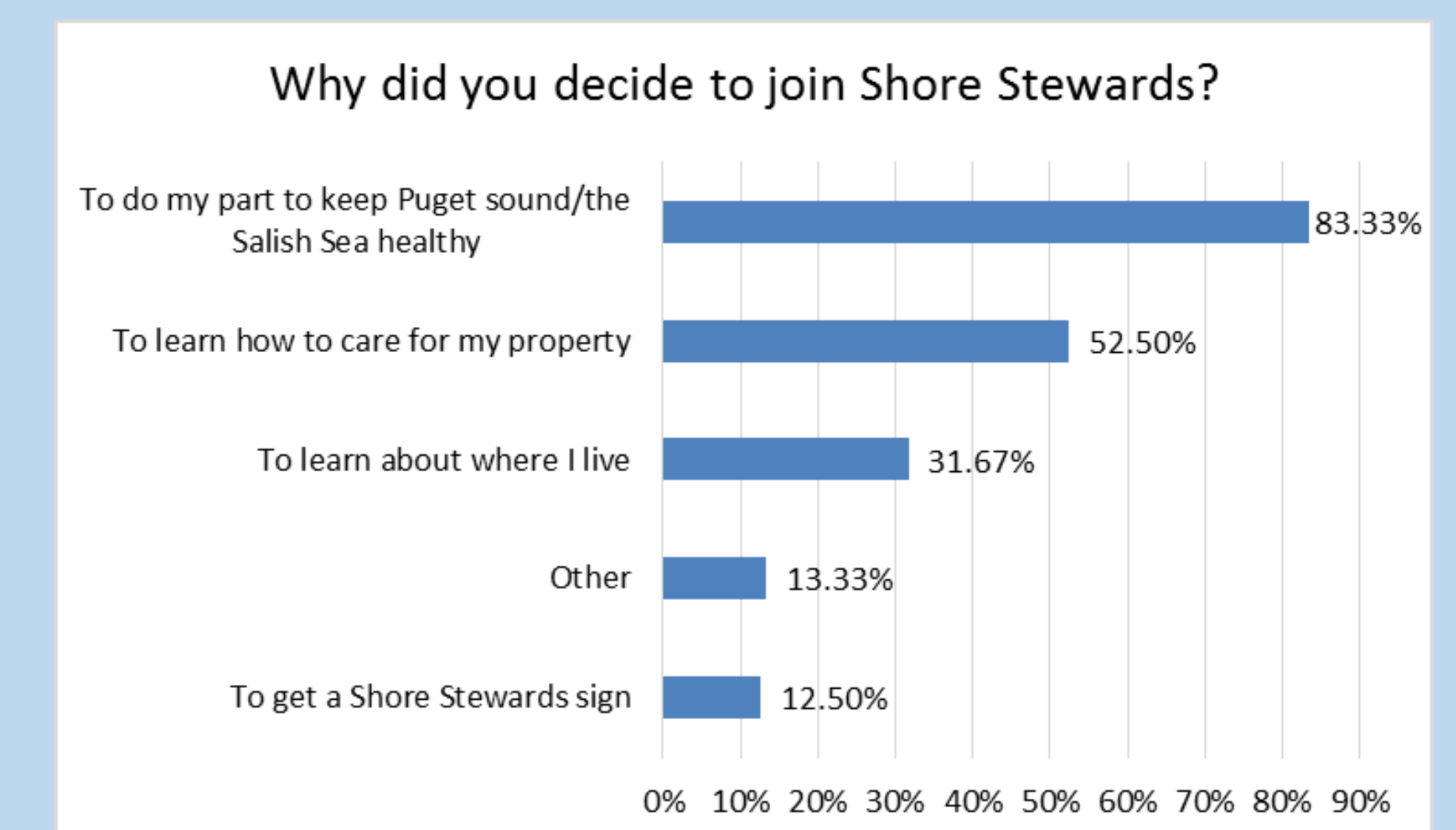


The Shore Stewards News is a bi-monthly newsletter.

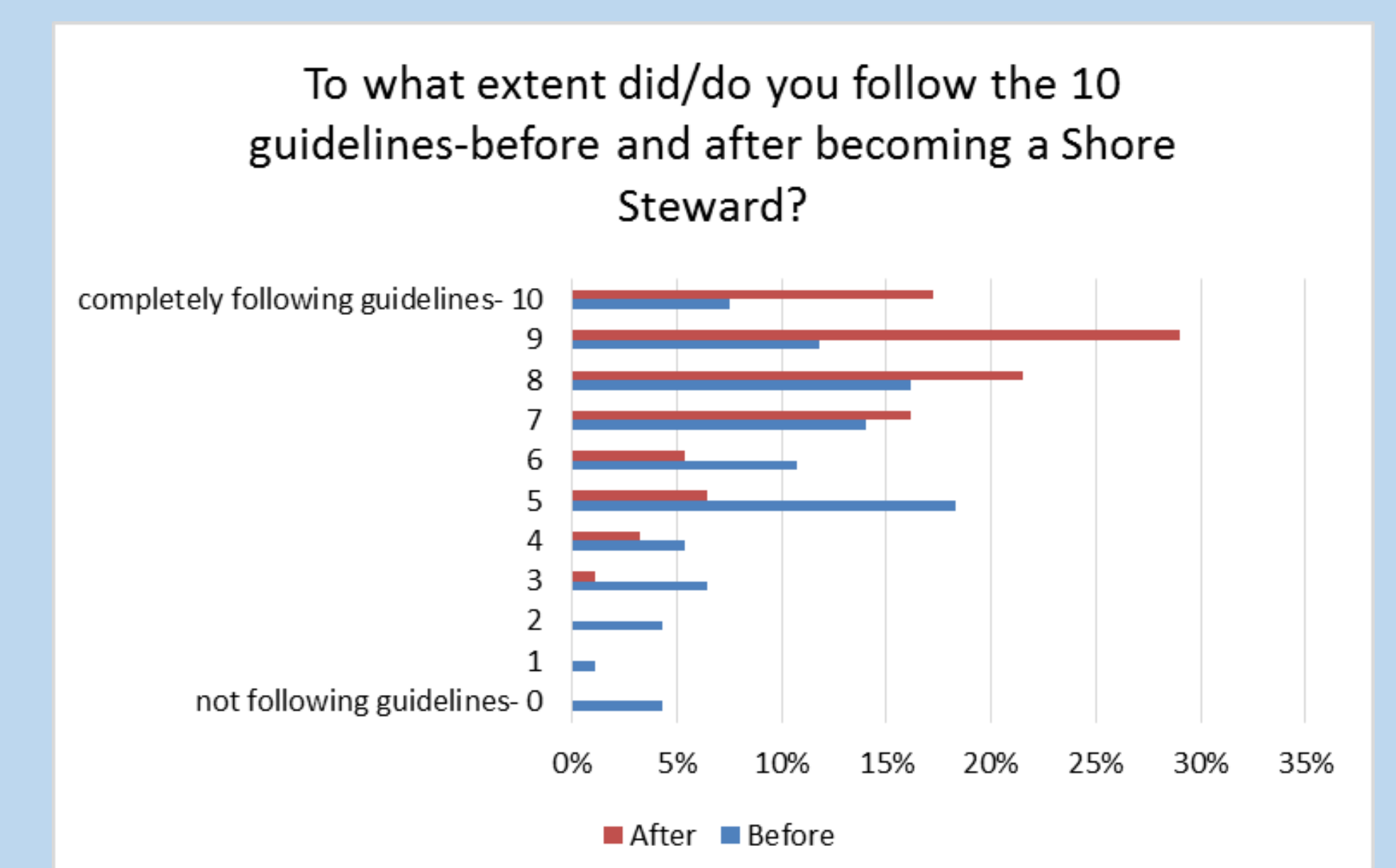
Program Assessment

In 2014/2015, WSU conducted an assessment of the Shore Stewards program. The assessment explored behavior and knowledge change among members as a result of participation in the program and other influences outside the program that may shift knowledge and behaviors. It also included programmatic issues including topics and areas of interest, reasons for joining the program, and the usefulness of available tools and resources.

The assessment was conducted through online surveys and telephone interviews. All 2,776 Shore Stewards were contacted by email and invited to participate in one of the assessment methods. Fifteen Shore Stewards participated in a telephone interview and 122 completed the online survey.



The results of both the online survey and telephone interviews indicate that most Shore Stewards signed up for the program because the information provided in the program would be useful in helping them understand how to take care of their property and as a result of their stewardship ethic and values.



Respondents were asked to rank their behavior in following the 10 Guidelines for Shoreline Living before and after joining the program on a scale from 0 (not following the guidelines at all) to 10 (completely following the guidelines.) The majority of Shore Stewards (84%) reported a high level of observance of the guidelines with a ranking between 7-10 after enrollment. No one reported below a 3 after joining the program. These results suggest the program is effective in changing private resident’s behavior in shoreline property management.