

Shore Aquatic Center

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We sat down with Steve Burke, Director of William Shore Memorial Pool to discuss their recent \$16m expansion. The pool has always been a priority for the community since the Port Angeles area is surrounded by water and provides access to swimmer safety education which is of primary importance.



This pool, originally William Shore Memorial pool, has an interesting history as it was very nearly shut down in 2009 when it was not only saved, but has become a popular community facility since, with two significant upgrades over the last decade. This was thanks to the community itself. The voters established The Metropolitan Park District in 2009 when they took over the pool from the City of Port Angeles. This Park District serves all the residents who live within the district's service area and they hired Steve Burke as Facilities Director at that time.



At that point, they had a single pool and decided to upgrade to a Salt Pure® system in 2012. Once again, this was a committee driven decision as The Pool Advisory committee had several members who were familiar with salt water and felt it would make for a better environment for the swimmers. According to Steve, this change led to more than triple their average pool use and eventually drove the need for the major expansion of 2019. This expansion included a remodel of the existing pool and the addition of 3 bodies of water. This was important to accommodate all sectors of the community as each pool has a distinct temperature and function including a Spa, Therapy pool, Activity pool and Lap.

We asked Steve about their decision to implement salt in the new pools:

"I have no choice; the pool users would terminate me if I didn't do it. Salt was the only program that was universally accepted because "we like it". People don't really like swimming in chlorine, and we get a higher volume of people swimming here because they do not see our pool as a chlorine pool. Point is, no-one ever says they will only swim in a chlorine pool, but many people will say they will only swim in a salt pool! They love the soft water!"



They have now been open since October 2020 and despite the COVID restrictions which required them running at 30% occupancy, the usage is higher than before with an average swimmer population of 500 per day visiting the center.



The initial swimmer response back in 2012 was overwhelmingly positive and remains so today. According to Steve, this is one thing that everyone agrees on. He states that the swimmers love it and dealing with TMI is always a positive experience.



"Love the upgrades! It's so nice to be able to breathe AND not smell like chlorine all day. Bravo!" – William Shore Memorial Pool User