

Washington State Shoreline Management Act

WA State Department of Ecology
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Today's Objectives:

- Present a brief overview of Washington State's approach to shorelines management
- Report on status of current and future comprehensive Shoreline Master Program (SMP) updates
- Identify ways shoreline management efforts in Puget Sound support salmon recovery

Shoreline Management Act (SMA)

- In effect now for over 35 years. The State Legislature adopted version took effect June 1971
- Designed as a cooperative state/local partnership:
 - Local governments are responsible for shoreline planning and for administering the regulatory program, through locally developed and customized Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs)
 - Ecology provides guidance and financial support to local governments, maintains procedural and substantive (Guidelines) rules to implement the SMA and must approve local SMPs before they take effect

Shoreline Management Act Policy

- There are three basic policies established in the SMA (RCW 90.58.020)
- These policies, which provide the legal foundation for the SMP Guidelines and local SMPs, include...

SMA policy (RCW 90.58.020):

“protecting against adverse effects to the public health, the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the waters of the state and their aquatic life...”



SMA policy (RCW 90.58.020):
- Continued -

“...uses shall be preferred which are consistent with control of pollution and prevention of damage to the natural environment, or are unique to or dependent upon use of the state’s shoreline.”



SMA policy (RCW 90.58.020):
- Continued -

“Permitted uses in the shorelines of the state shall be designed and conducted in a manner to minimize, insofar as practical...any interference with the public’s use of the water.”



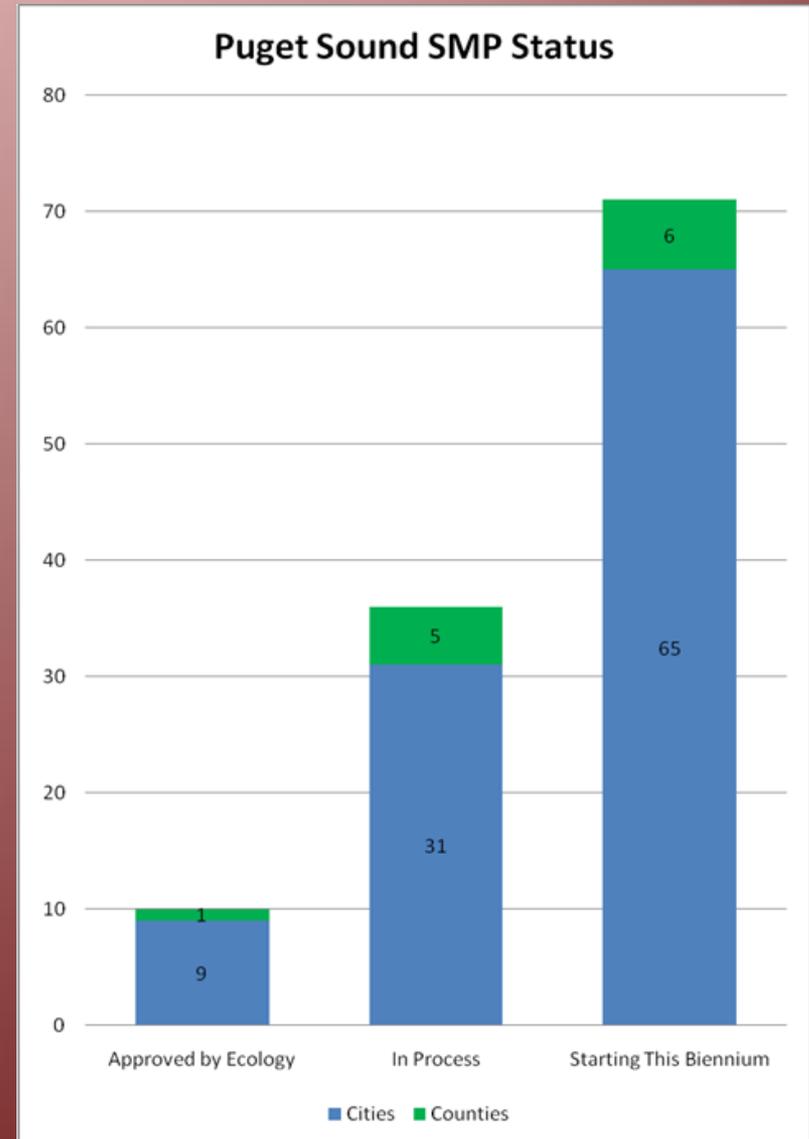
What are the SMP Guidelines?

- The Shoreline Master Program Guidelines set minimum procedural and substantive standards that must be applied as local governments update their SMPs
- The Guidelines are also used by Ecology (and the GMHB's) in reviewing and approving local SMPs
- The guidelines (WAC 173-26, Part III) were last updated by Ecology in December 2003, and provide direction in implementing the policy of the SMA

SMP Update Funding & Schedule

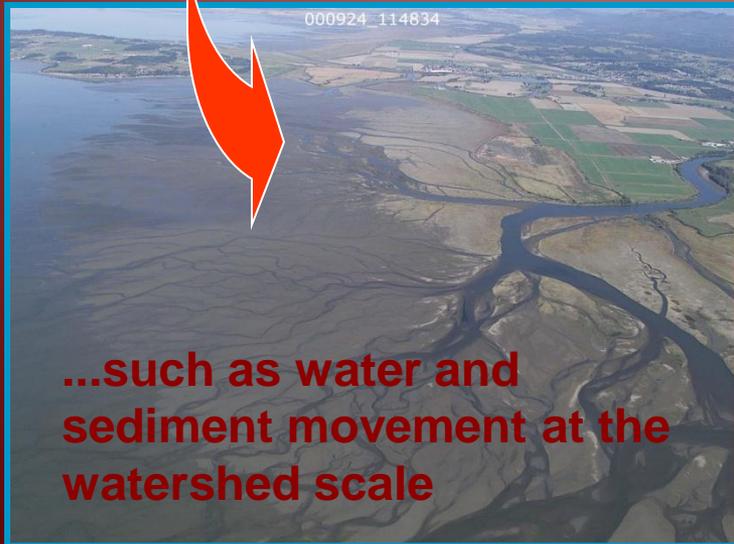
- **Funding** – \$7.5 million this biennium to local governments for the purpose of updating Puget Sound SMPs
- **Deadlines** – local SMP updates complete for all 266 jurisdictions state-wide by 2014

Local “review” for consistency with the guidelines every 7 years thereafter...



Key governing principles applied
in the update of local SMPs:

Understanding shoreline ecological processes and functions



...such as beach or stream channel formation

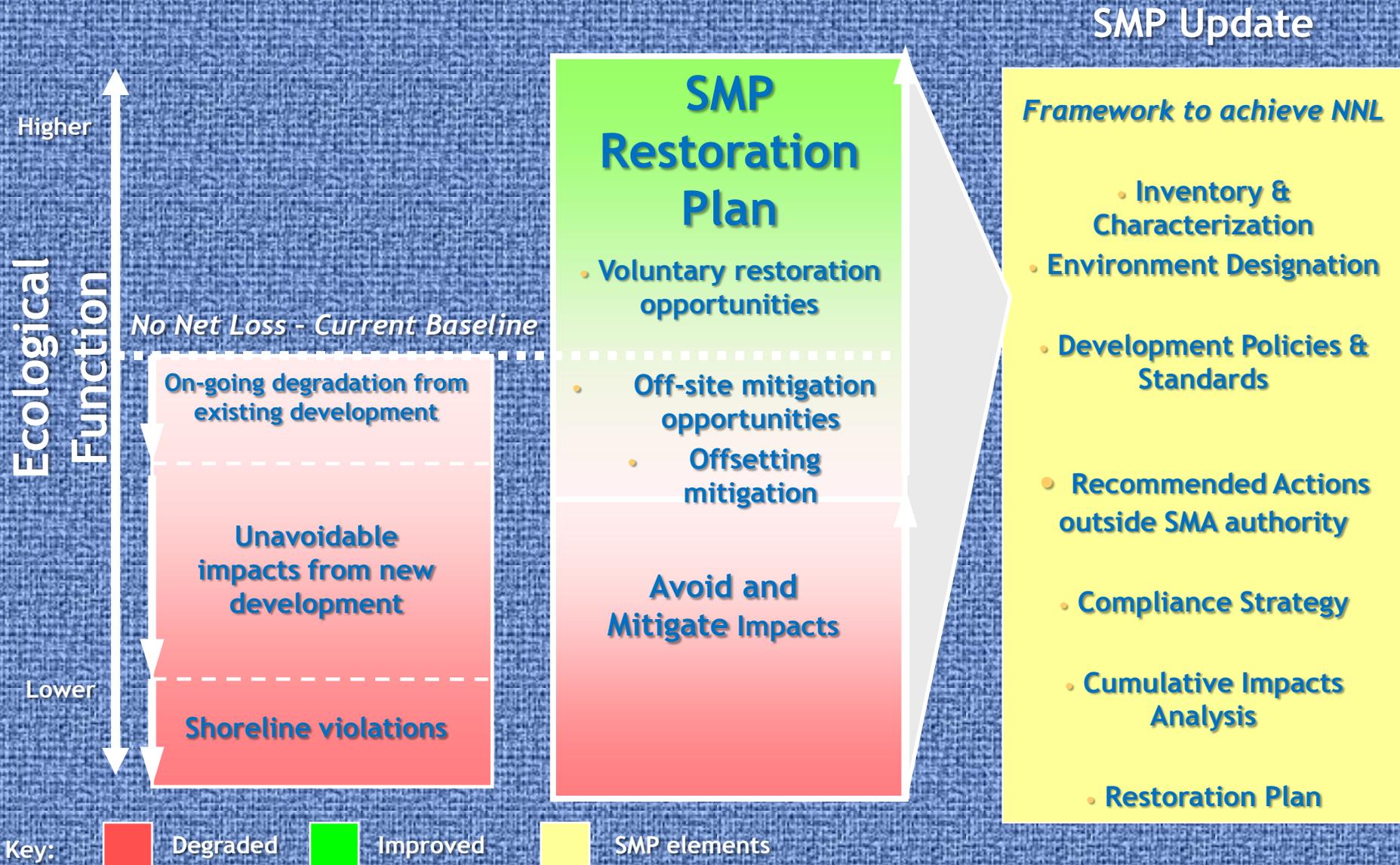
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No-Net-Loss of Shoreline Ecological Functions

- “No-net-loss of shoreline ecological functions” is set as the environmental protection standard updated SMPs must achieve
- Local gov'ts are required to inventory current shoreline conditions, identifying the processes and functions that influence physical and biological conditions, at both landscape (or watershed) and more detailed reach or drift cell-specific scales

SMP Updates: Achieving No Net Loss of Ecological Function



Cumulative Impacts

“reasonably foreseeable” cumulative impacts to shoreline ecological functions resulting from new development allowed by the proposed SMP, must be:

- evaluated, and
- avoided,
- or mitigated for, in satisfying the “no net loss of shoreline ecological functions” standard

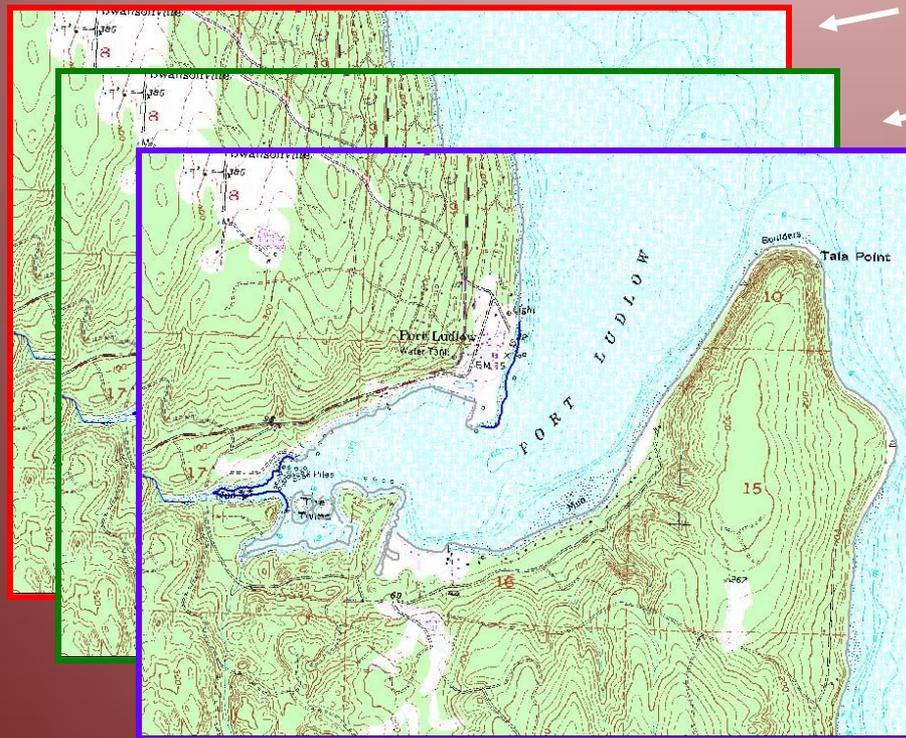
Restoration Planning

- Considering unique local circumstances, local gov'ts must:
 - identify shoreline areas with impaired or degraded functions
 - prioritize potential restoration “opportunities”
 - identify existing projects, programs and funding sources that accomplish restoration
 - prepare a comprehensive “strategy” (goals, timelines, benchmarks) that ensures local restoration objectives are met “over time”

Typical Three-Year Local SMP Update Process:

1. Citizen involvement throughout the process
2. Conduct shoreline inventory and use analysis
3. Establish shoreline goals, policies and environment designations
4. Establish shoreline use and modification regulations and standards
5. Update permit administration and enforcement provisions
6. Locally adopt
7. Submit to Ecology for approval before effective

Map findings from each analysis and consider (overlay) all the elements together



← Processes and functions

← Shoreline uses/mods

← Public access

- What areas are critical for ecological protection & salmon recovery?
- What uses will interrupt important ecological processes?
- Where can development occur & under what conditions?
- What restoration opportunities exist for degraded areas?

Determine Opportunity Areas

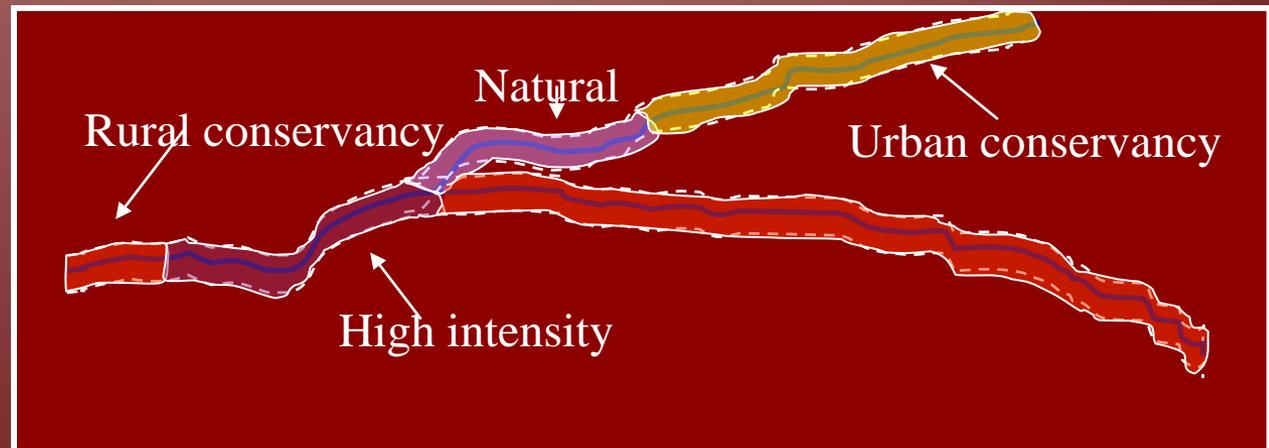
Integrate shoreline characterizations, maps and field work to determine opportunities for:

- Protecting the life cycle of salmon
- Protecting/restoring ecological functions, including riparian habitat
- Removing existing shoreline armoring, fish barriers, noxious weeds and overwater structures
- Avoiding, minimizing and compensating for impacts to functions from new shoreline development

Apply Shoreline Environment Designations and Regulations

Determine areas with similar ecological conditions or uses and identify:

- Management strategies for each environment
- Allowable uses and modification activities
- Standards (i.e. buffers, setbacks, density, armoring, etc.) for each environment



Updated SMPs support Puget Sound Salmon Recovery:

- Timing is good - SMP updates currently underway or starting now focus almost exclusively on Puget Sound jurisdictions
- SMA policy and SMP guidelines clearly recognize salmon recovery objectives
- No-net-loss of ecological function IS the new Shoreline Management standard
- Updated SMPs characterize and regulate floodplain habitat functions

Updated SMPs support PS Salmon Recovery:

- Protection of riparian habitat through required buffers is SOP
- Fish barrier removal and enhancement of riparian habitat is recognized as key to successful shoreline restoration planning
- New shoreline armoring allowed only where need is demonstrated using “soft” before “hard” techniques; removal of existing armoring encouraged

For more information:

Please visit our web site at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/index.html>