

PAW WA 2026 | APRIL 22, 2026



2026 SMA Rulemaking:

# Planning Ahead



# Introductions



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*Executive Vice President*



**ALEXANDRA PLUMB**

*Senior Planner*

# Introductions



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*SMA Policy Lead*



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# Agenda

01

SMA RULEMAKING  
OVERVIEW

02

PIERCE COUNTY'S  
APPROACH

03

KEY CONSIDERATIONS OF  
THE SMA RULEMAKING

04

Q&A Session

01

# SMA Rulemaking Overview

# Shoreline Management Act Rulemaking

Chapter 90.58 RCW

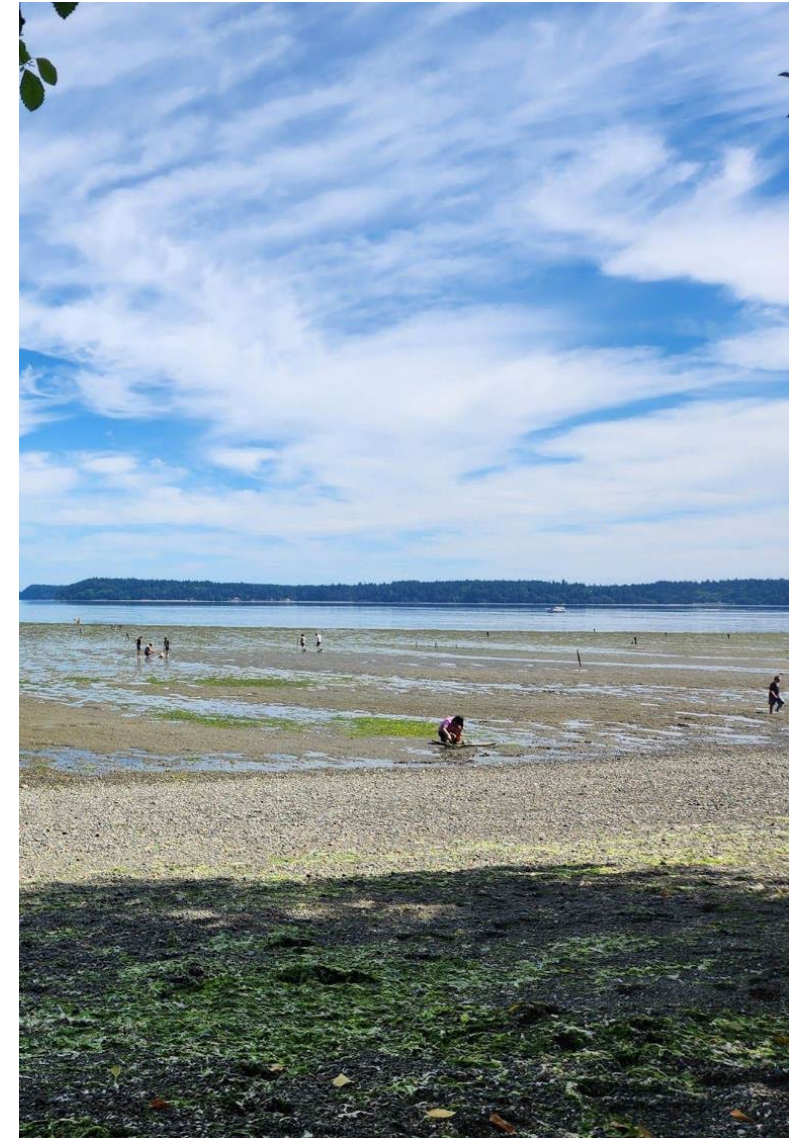


- Updating WACs 173-18, -20, -22, -26, and -27
- Addressing sea level rise requirements from HB1181 (RCW 90.58.630) and addressing many other topics

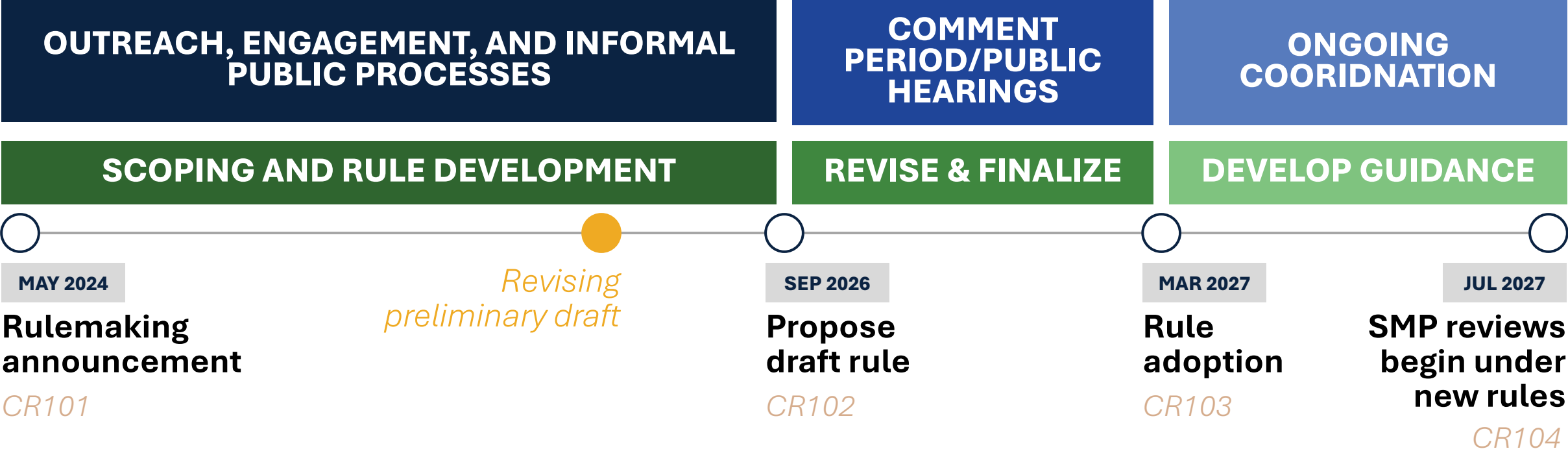


# Rulemaking Topics

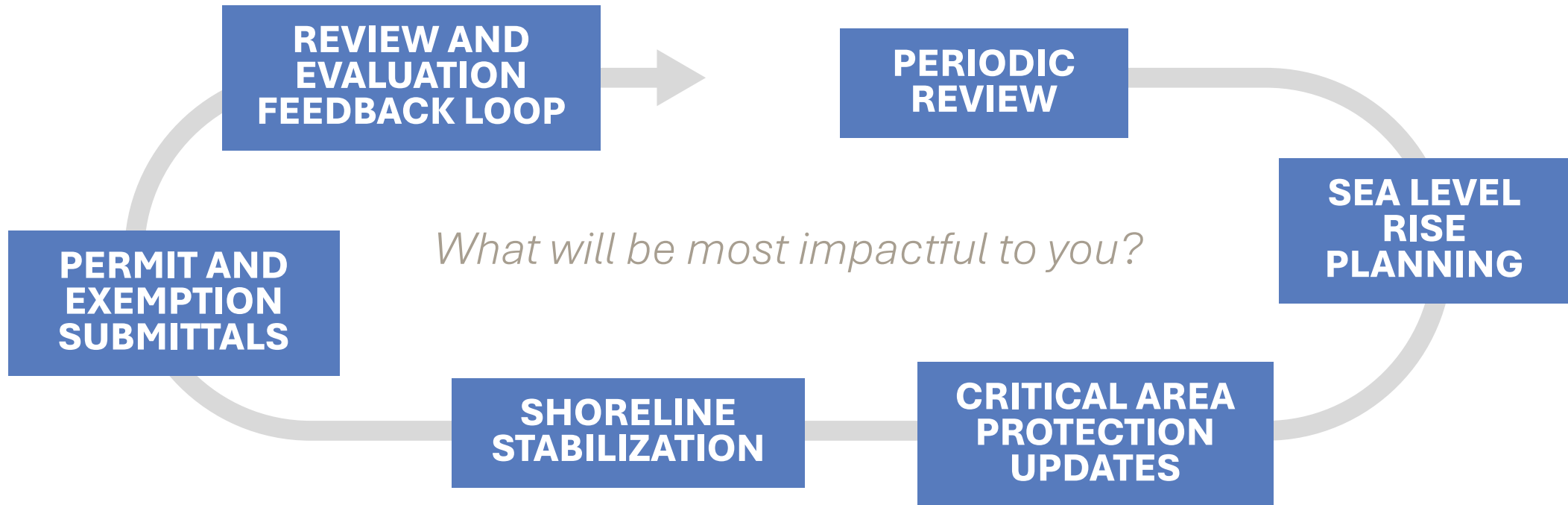
- Compliance and enforcement
- Critical area and shoreline ecological function protection
- Modifications and shoreline stabilization
- Nonconforming development
- Permitting
- Public participation
- Residential, middle housing, and ADUs
- Sea level rise
- Shoreline of Statewide Significance
- SMP amendment and periodic review requirements
- Tribal engagement and notification
- Voluntary shoreline restoration



# SMA Rulemaking Timeline

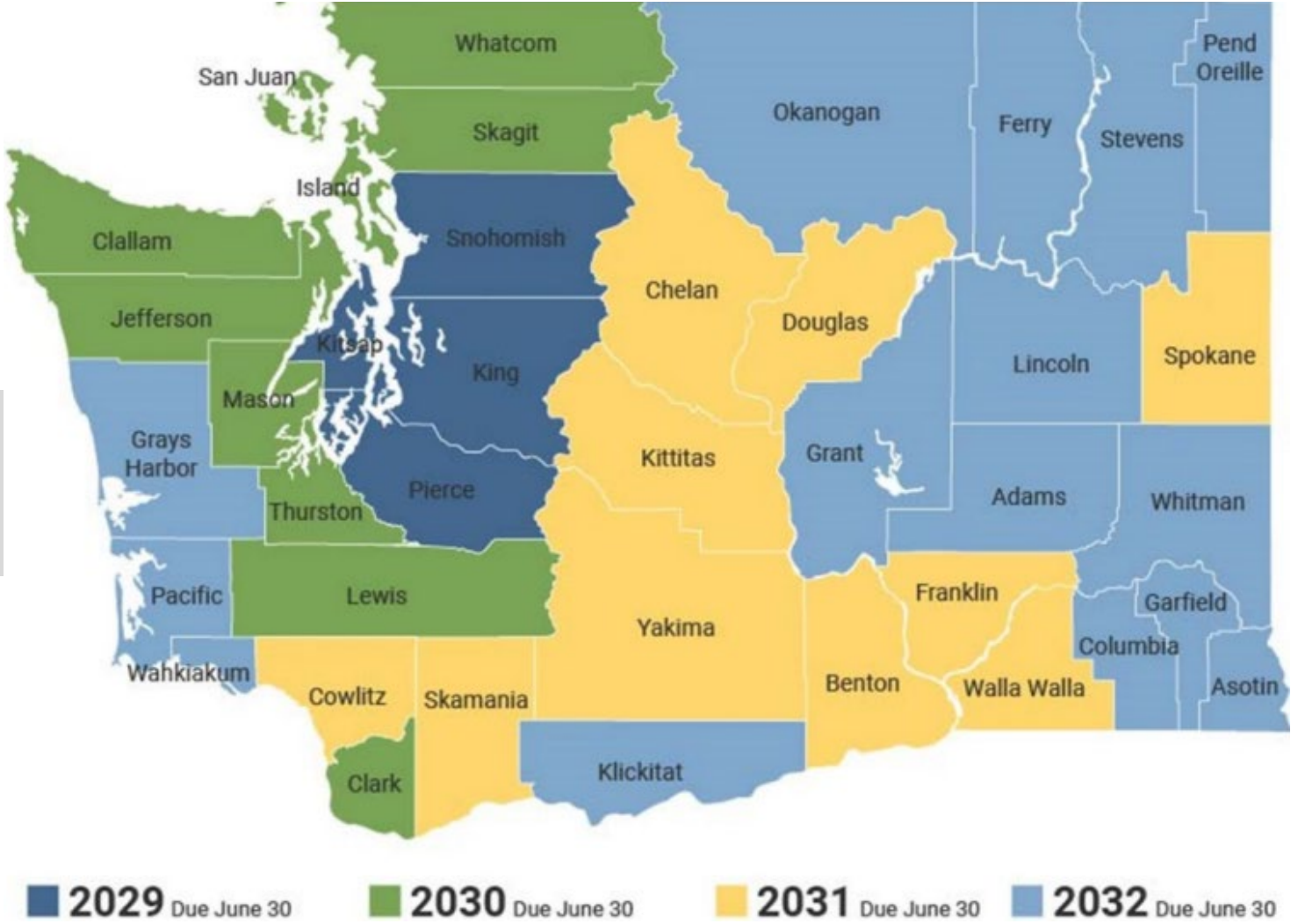


# Key Considerations



# SMP Periodic Review

*New rules will change the requirements for the next round of SMP periodic reviews*



# SMP Periodic Review

*What's new?*

## PROCESS DIFFERENCES

Encouraged collaboration among local governments

Early scoping outreach

Tribal engagement

## CONTENT DIFFERENCES

Longer checklist and updated guidance

# Sea Level Rise Requirements

- Address the impact of sea level rise and increase storm severity in SMPs
  - **Inventory** of hazards, assets & features
  - **Assessment** of exposure
  - **Analysis** of existing regulations
  - **Policy requirements**
  - **Regulatory options**
- Consideration of diverse shoreline environments and hazard profiles



# Sea Level Rise Planning

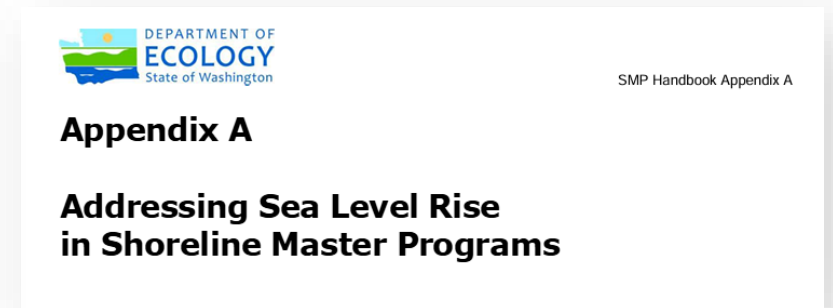
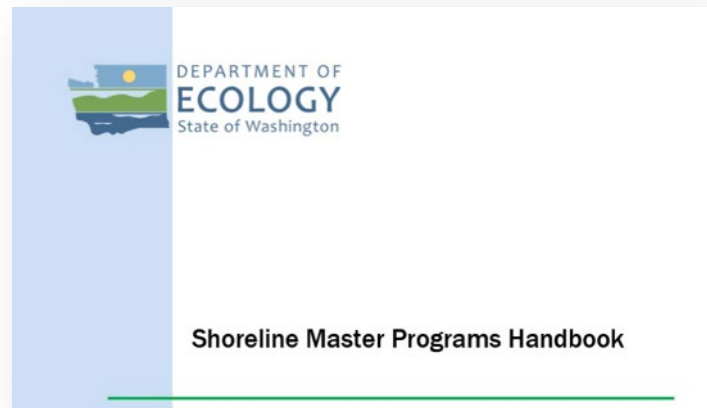
*What to expect from Ecology*

## INFORMATION

- Sea level rise hazards, assets & features spatial data and exposure mapping

## GUIDANCE

- New SMP Handbook Chapter
- Example language
- SMP analysis support



# Critical Areas in Shoreline Jurisdiction

- Address critical areas protections directly in the SMP
- Consistent with new shoreline specific critical area provisions in WAC 173-26-226

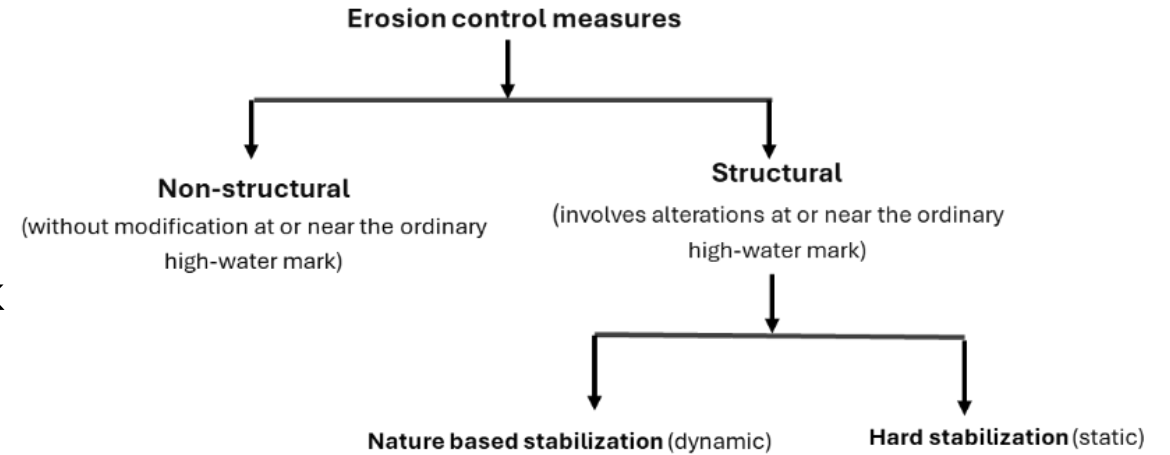
*Critical Area Ordinance may not be incorporated by reference into SMPs.*



# Shoreline Stabilization

All shoreline stabilization proposals shall include a **geotechnical report**, prepared by qualified professionals, including:

- Demonstration of erosion
- Identification of the structure or infrastructure at risk
- Alternatives analysis
- Ecological impact analysis



# Shoreline Permit & Exemption Submittals

**WAC 173-27-995 Appendix B.**

**Shoreline Management Act  
Exemption Data Sheet and Transmittal Form**

From: (local government)	To: (appropriate Ecology office) <input type="checkbox"/> NWRO <input type="checkbox"/> SWRO <input type="checkbox"/> CRO <input type="checkbox"/> ERO
Date of transmittal:	Date of local government decision:
Exemption(s) applied to the project (indicate all that apply):	
<b>Does the submittal include the following?</b> A copy of the local government decision, in the form it was provided to applicant. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no A site plan consistent with WAC 173-27-040(3)(f). <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no Demonstration of the application of mitigation sequence. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no Any special reports. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	
<b>Local Government Decision.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Conditional Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Denial	

**NEW EXEMPTION DATA SHEET AND TRANSMITTAL FORM**

**WAC 173-27-990 Appendix A.**

**Shoreline Management Act  
Shoreline Permit Data Sheet and Transmittal Letter**

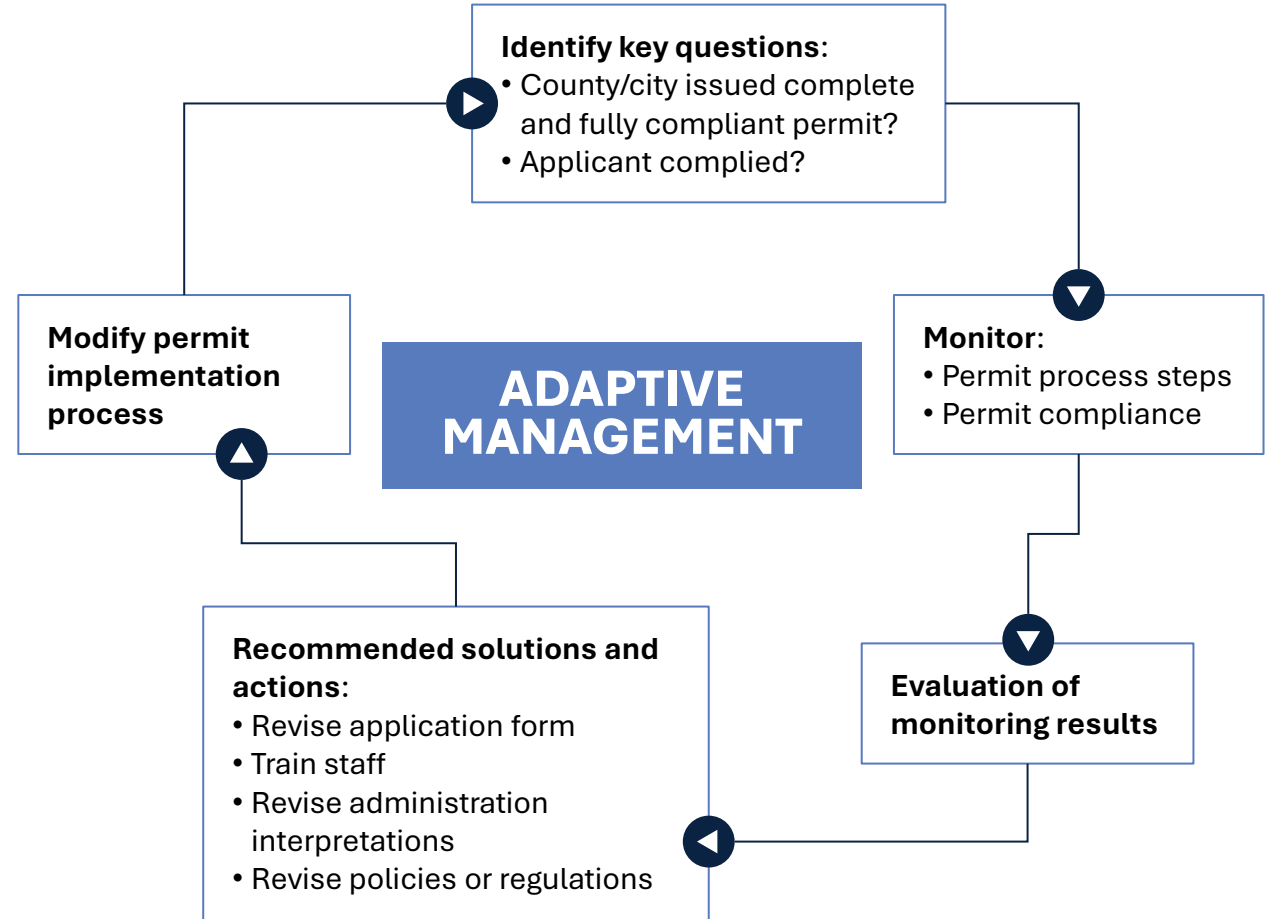
From: (local government)	To: (appropriate Ecology office) <input type="checkbox"/> NWRO <input type="checkbox"/> SWRO <input type="checkbox"/> CRO <input type="checkbox"/> ERO
Date of transmittal:	Date of receipt: (provided by Ecology)
<b>Type of permit or authorization</b> (indicate all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Substantial development <input type="checkbox"/> Conditional use <input type="checkbox"/> Variance <input type="checkbox"/> Revision <input type="checkbox"/> Rescission <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration Relief	
For conditional use permits and variances, identify what aspect(s) of the proposal trigger the conditional use permit and/or variance?	
<b>Local Government Decision.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Conditional Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Denial	

**UPDATED SHORELINE PERMIT DATA SHEET AND TRANSMITTAL LETTER**

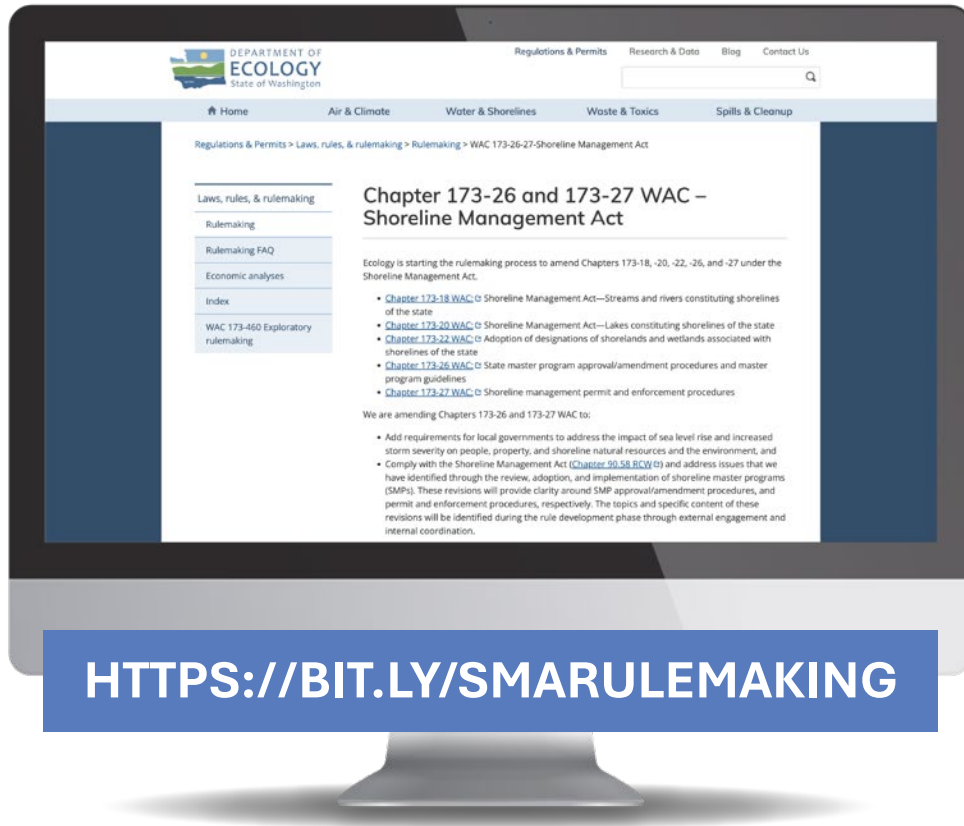
*New External Submittal Portal for shoreline permit filing and exemption submittals coming in early 2028.*

# Review and Evaluation

- Shoreline permitting system requirements, permit triggers and review/approval criteria.
- Document all authorizations in shoreline jurisdiction
- Collect permit data
- Review and evaluate once every (10) years
- Use this information to inform process improvements and/or revisions to SMP policies and regulations



# GovDelivery



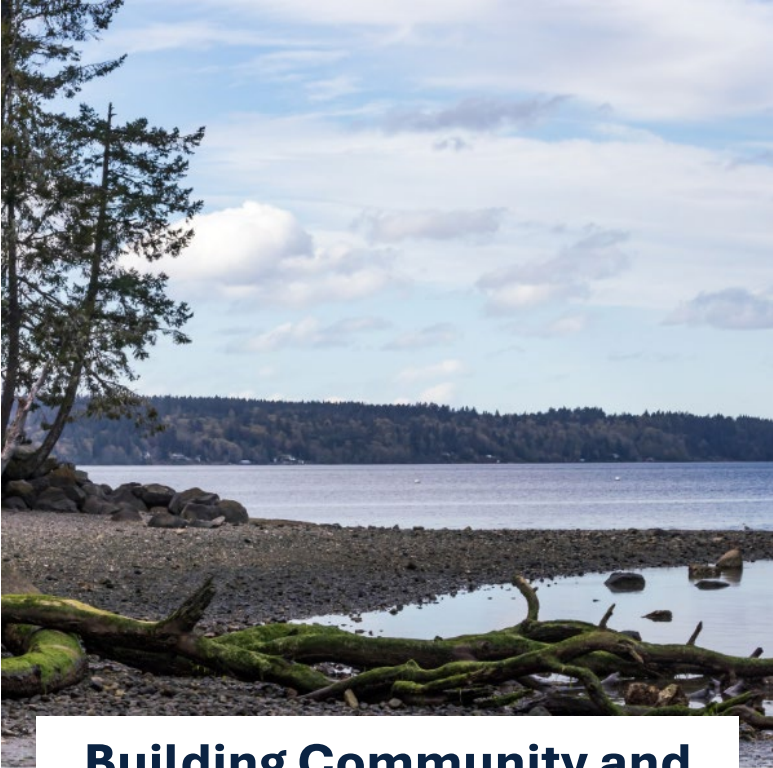
- Sign up for **GovDelivery** announcements
- Access preliminary draft and other materials
- Future meetings posted here and sent out via GovDelivery



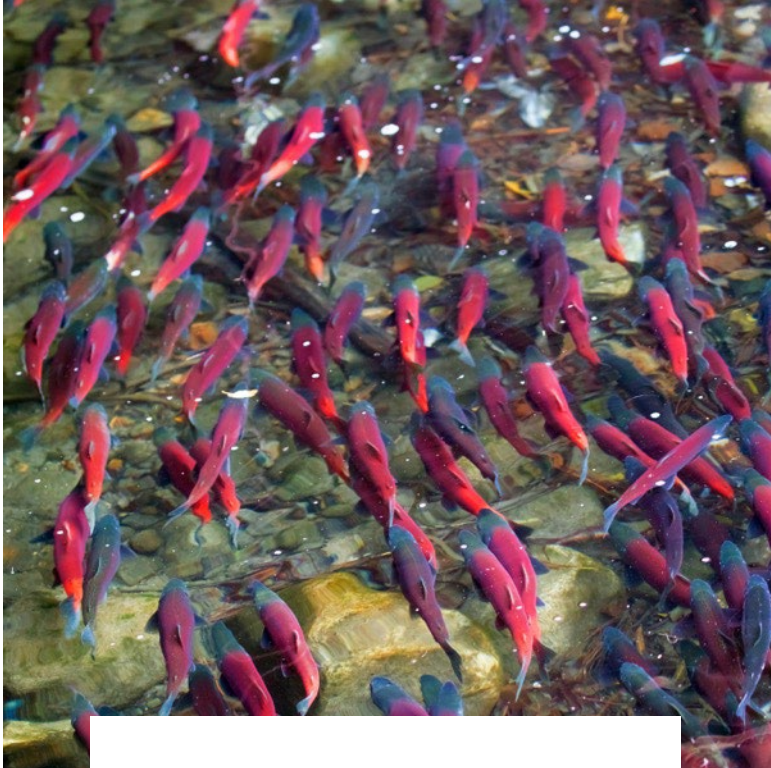
02

# Pierce County's Approach

# Seizing Opportunities to Achieve Goals



**Building Community and Landscape Climate Resilience**



**Improve Salmon Habitat**



**Deeper Engagement with Local Communities**

# Creating Resources



## FIND PARTNERS WITH OVERLAPPING INTEREST

- Outside our community
- Inside our community
- In-house



## IDENTIFY & SECURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Shared projects
- Federal & state grants

# Pierce County Mission



*Forward Together*  
**TRIBAL & EARLY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

# Making Decisions



## WHITE PAPERS

- SAV protections
- Expansion of SMP jurisdiction
- Mitigation banking



## INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS

- Integration of CA into SMP
- Understand work nexus

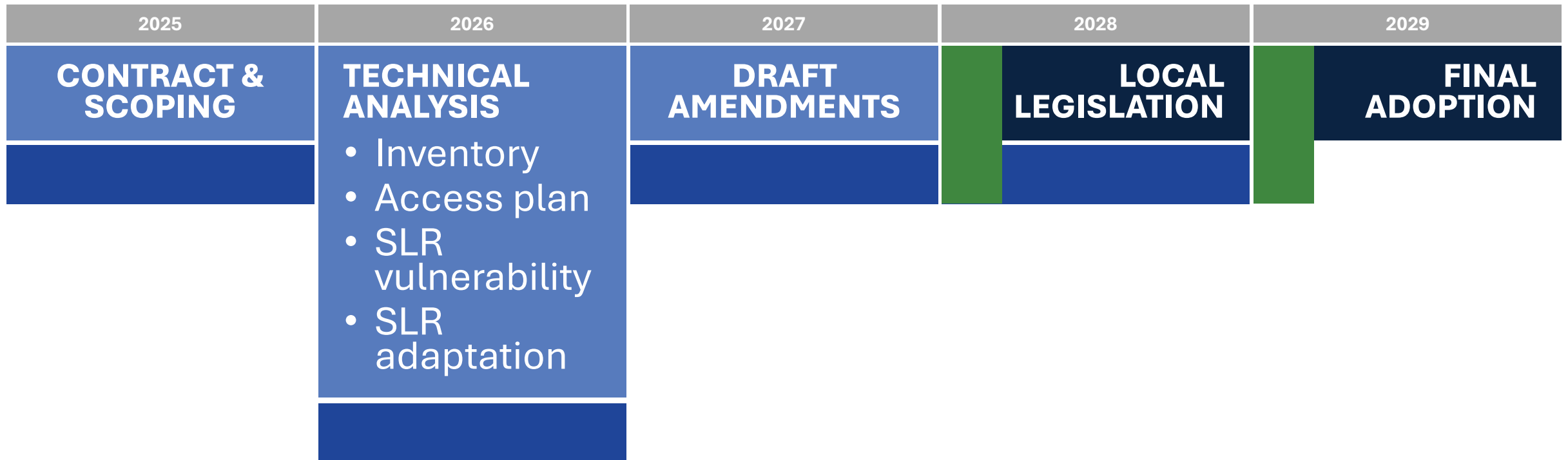


## PROJECT MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS

- Charters speak for you
- Memos elevate issues
- Document decision making

# Building Out the Timeline

■ Staging for studies    
 ■ Structure engagement    
 ■ Giving space for unknowns



# Navigating Together

Our roadmap for engagement



**PUBLIC  
PARTICIPATION  
PLAN**

Focuses on technical review and scientific credibility



**TECHNICAL  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE**

Sets values and shapes goals and policies



**COMMUNITY  
ADVISORY  
WORKING GROUP**

# Integrating Coordination

- Interdepartmental team
- PCRC – GMCC
- DNR – kelp & eelgrass plan
- LIO's & watershed council's



# Leading with Values

## ROAD TO SUCCESS

Provide meaningful opportunities to participate

Protect the resources and services shorelines offer

Build resilient landscapes and communities

# 03

## Key Considerations of SMA Rulemaking

# Statements of Exemptions

- **Must transmit** the statement of exemption to Ecology's online transmittal system (once available)
- **Demonstration of application of mitigation sequencing**



- *Improved tracking and monitoring of cumulative impacts and no net loss*
- *Standardized metrics*

PROS



- *Additional documentation required by applicants*
- *Shift in procedure*
- *Increased staff time for review and transmittal*

CONS

# Critical Areas within Shoreline Jurisdiction

- **Channel Migration Zones (CMZs)**
  - Option to include standards that limit development
  - Option of adding to the FWHCA, FFA, or geologically hazardous area regulations
- **Clarifies allowance to extend shoreline jurisdiction**
- **Limitations on buffer reductions and common-line setbacks**
  - Allowances must result in both **protection of the shoreline ecological functions and enhancements of the remaining buffer**



- *Eliminates conflict between SMP and CAO updates*
- *Improved guidance for extension of shoreline jurisdiction*
- *Provides option to regulate CMZs*

PROS



- *Significant effort to embed critical areas regulations*
- *Potential increased costs may be associated with buffer reductions & common-line applications*
- *CMZs are not always mapped*

CONS

# Critical Saltwater Habitat

- **Inventory** of site and adjacent beach for presence of critical saltwater habitats for **over-water and nearshore developments**
- **Structures shall not intrude into or over** critical saltwater habitats
- **Establish adequate buffer zones** to separate incompatible uses
- **Identify and protect existing connections and corridors** between critical saltwater habitat and freshwater riparian areas



- *Improves protection for submerged aquatic vegetation*
- *Provides clearer administration*
- *Improves protection for habitat corridors*

**PROS**



- *New mapping efforts may be required*
- *Potential new buffers around habitats*
- *New requirements for over-water and nearshore development*
- *Prohibits structures intruding into or over saltwater habitat (removes exception)*

**CONS**

# Shoreline Stabilization

- New stabilization must include **plans are made to maintain and eventually decommission**
- **Provides specific requirements** for geotechnical reports, including an alternatives analysis
- Requires an **ecological impact analysis** for all new, enlarged or expanded stabilizations
- Nature-based stabilization is identified as the **preferred approach**



- *Increased ecological protections*
- *Improved implementation criteria*

PROS



- *Additional reporting requirements for applicants*
- *Decreased allowances*
- *Increased review time for staff*

CONS

# Sea Level Rise Planning

- Specific development application requirements and review considerations
- **Special area planning** – adaptation strategies for neighborhoods or resilience district
- **Variances and conditional use applications** must demonstrate compatibility with current and future hazards, **including projected sea level rise impacts**



- *Increased coastal resilience*
- *Reduced risks to new, redeveloped coastal structures*

PROS



- *Additional reporting requirements for applicants within designated SLR hazard areas*
- *Significant effort to incorporate new requirements*

CONS

# 04

## Q&A

**What are some concerns around the draft SMA rulemaking?**

**What are opportunities in this periodic update cycle?**

**Budget? Mapping? Timing? Data?**



**Thank you!**



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