Washington State Wetland Program Plan

2023 Update

Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program

Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, Washington

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[1] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2306011.html
[2] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/1406005.html
[3] https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/wetlands/tools-resources/contacts-by-subject-region
[4] https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility

Washington State
Wetland Program Plan

2023 Update

Prepared in coordination with the
Wetland Program Plan Interagency Work Group

September 2023 | Publication 23-06-011

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Washington State Conservation Commission

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STATE OF WASHINGTON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
PO Box 47721 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7721 • (360) 407-6200 • FAX (360) 407-6215

August 4, 2023

Joenne McGerr
Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program Manager
Washington Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Joenne McGerr:

The Washington State Conservation Commission supports the goals and the work of the new Washington State Wetland Program Plan (WPP). The State Conservation Commission has been represented on the WPP Interagency Work Group during this update and has participated in development of it. Our needs and objectives are represented here along with other state agencies.

This plan supports the State Conservation Commission's goals of…

- Supporting state and local governments in planning to protect our shared vital wetland critical areas in Washington state.
- Supporting a coordinated approach to wetland conservation by Washington state agencies.
- Enabling a watershed or landscape-scale approach to wetlands designation and protection through comprehensive planning.

To the best of our ability, we will remain engaged with the WPP Interagency Work Group in reviewing and discussing progress towards achieving the goals of the plan. We feel that a coordinated statewide wetland program benefits Washington through more efficient and effective wetland protection and management.

Sincerely,

Kirk Robinson
Interim Executive Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
1011 Plum Street SE • PO Box 42525 • Olympia, Washington 98504-2525 • (360) 725-4000
www.commerce.wa.gov

Joenne McGerr
Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program Manager
Washington Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Joenne McGerr:

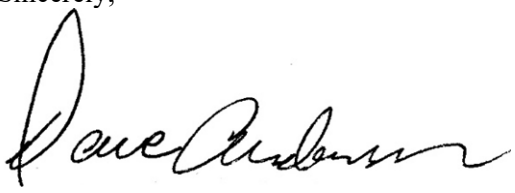
The Department of Commerce supports the goals and the work of the new Washington State Wetland Program Plan (WPP). The Department of Commerce has been represented on the WPP Interagency Work Group during this update and has participated in development of it. Our needs and objectives are represented here along with other state agencies.

This plan supports the Department of Commerce goals of…

- Supporting state and local governments in planning to protect our shared vital wetland critical areas in Washington state.
- Supporting a coordinated approach to wetland conservation by Washington state agencies.
- Enabling a watershed or landscape-scale approach to wetlands designation and protection through comprehensive planning.

To the best of our ability, we will remain engaged with the WPP Interagency Work Group in reviewing and discussing progress towards achieving the goals of the plan. We feel that a coordinated statewide wetland program benefits Washington through more efficient and effective wetland protection and management.

Sincerely,



Dave Andersen, AICP
Managing Director
Department of Commerce, Growth Management Services

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Recreation, and Conservation Division
1111 Washington Street SE
Olympia, WA 98504-47014

August 15, 2023

Joenne McGerr
Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program Manager
Washington Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Joenne McGerr:

The Washington Dept. of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Program (WNHP) has a long history of collaborating with Ecology to identify wetlands with the most significant biodiversity value and finding ways to protect those through regulatory and voluntary actions. WNHP supports the goals and the work of the new Washington State Wetland Program Plan (WPP). The WNHP has been represented on the WPP Interagency Work Group during this update and has participated in development of it. Our needs and objectives are represented here along with other state agencies.

This plan supports WNHP's goals to:

- Support state and local governments in planning to protect our shared vital wetland critical areas in Washington State.
- Increase wetland conservation success through a coordinated approach by Washington state agencies.
- Inform watershed or landscape-scale planning to better protect wetlands with high biodiversity value through comprehensive planning.

To the best of our ability, we will remain engaged with the WPP Interagency Work Group in reviewing and discussing progress towards achieving the goals of the plan. We feel that a coordinated statewide wetland program benefits Washington through more efficient and effective wetland protection and management.

Sincerely,

Joe Rocchio
Program Manager
Washington Dept. of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Program

Washington State Department of Transportation

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June 8, 2023

Ahmer Nizam
Environmental Services Director
Washington State Department of Transportation
310 Maple Park Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Dear Joenne McGerr:

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) supports the goals and the work of the new Washington State Wetland Program Plan (WPP). WSDOT has been represented on the WPP Interagency Work Group during this update and has participated in its development. The WPP is consistent with our policy objectives and agency goals, including:

- Secretary's Executive Order on Wetlands Protection and Preservation
- Legislative Transportation system policy goals
- The resiliency components of our agency's Strategic Plan

A coordinated statewide wetland program benefits Washington through more efficient and effective wetland protection and management. We intend to remain engaged with the WPP Interagency Work Group and otherwise do our part towards achieving the goals of the WPP.

Sincerely,

Ahmer Nizam
Environmental Services Director
Washington State Department of Transportation

Diana Dupuis
Director

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24 May, 2023

Joenne McGerr
Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program Manager
Washington Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Joenne McGerr:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission ("State Parks") supports the goals and the work of the new Washington State Wetland Program Plan (WPP). Parks has been represented on the WPP Interagency Work Group during this update and has participated in development of it. Our needs and objectives are represented here along with other state agencies.

This plan supports State Parks' goals of…

- Supporting state and local governments in planning to protect our shared vital wetland critical areas in Washington state.
- Supporting a coordinated approach to wetland conservation by Washington state agencies.
- Enabling a watershed or landscape-scale approach to wetlands designation and protection through comprehensive planning.

To the best of our ability, we will remain engaged with the WPP Interagency Work Group in reviewing and discussing progress towards achieving the goals of the plan. We feel that a coordinated statewide wetland program benefits Washington through more efficient and effective wetland protection and management.

Sincerely,

Andrea S. Thorpe, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Program Manager

Acronyms and Abbreviations

401 Water Quality Certification – Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification

CAO – Critical Areas Ordinance

C-CAP – Coastal Change Analysis Program

CMER – Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Committee

Commerce – Washington State Department of Commerce

Corps – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

CTP – Coastal Training Program

CWA – Clean Water Act (Federal Water Pollution Control Act)

Ecology – Washington State Department of Ecology

EIA – Ecological Integrity Assessment

EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

ESA – Endangered Species Act

GMA – Growth Management Act

IWG – Interagency Work Group (for the Wetland Program Plan)

NAIP – National Agriculture Imagery Program

NCWC – National Coastal Wetlands Conservation

NEP – National Estuary Program

NNL – No Net Loss

NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NTA – Near-Term Actions

NWCA – National Wetland Condition Assessment

NWI – National Wetlands Inventory

PSP – Puget Sound Partnership

QAPP – Quality Assurance Project Plan

RCO – Washington Recreation and Conservation Office

RCW – Revised Code of Washington

SFAM – Stream Function Assessment Method

SMP – Shoreline Master Programs

STATE PARKS – Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

USFWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

USNVC – U.S. National Vegetation Classification

UW – University of Washington

VSP – Voluntary Stewardship Program

WATOR – Washington Tool for Online Rating

WDFW – Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

WDNR – Washington State Department of Natural Resources

WHCV – Wetlands of High Conservation Value

WIP – Wetland Intrinsic Potential

WNHP – Washington Natural Heritage Program

WOTUS – Waters of the United States

WPDG – Wetland Program Development Grant

WPP – Wetland Program Plan

WSCC – Washington State Conservation Commission

WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation

Executive Summary

Washington's Wetland Program Plan (WPP) was adopted in March of 2015, with a six-year planning horizon. The WPP began as a comprehensive strategy that articulated the state's planned areas of focus in its wetland program during the 2015-2021 period. The WPP continued to be implemented as written during 2022. In updating the WPP for the period of 2023-2029, we continue to assert the importance of our wetland resources and the appropriate initial content of the 2015 plan.

Washington is home to many diverse wetlands that occur throughout the state. These wetlands offer unique and valuable characteristics that are critical to a healthy economy and environment. Wetlands provide irreplaceable services like flood management, erosion control, pollution reduction, and aquifer recharge. They serve as essential habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants, including state and federal threatened and endangered species. Additionally, wetlands provide excellent recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities that increase the quality of life for Washington residents.

This update should not be read in isolation. It serves as a supplement to the existing 2015 WPP. To avoid simply reprinting the original plan with numerous and potentially confusing edits, we submit this update to present our current planning horizon, as detailed in the 2023-2029 implementation schedule (Appendix B) and accompanying narrative. To highlight continuity with the 2015 WPP, the forward-looking implementation schedule cross-references relevant objectives, actions, and activities of the 2015 plan.

Retrospective (2015-2021)

Washington's Wetland Program Plan (WPP) was adopted in March of 2015, with a six-year planning horizon. The WPP was a comprehensive strategy that articulated where the state planned to focus its wetland program during the 2015-2021 period. The WPP continued to be implemented as written during 2022.

The goal of the state's wetland program remains to achieve no overall net loss in area and function of Washington's remaining wetlands and to further the long-term goal to increase the quantity and quality of Washington's wetlands resource base.

Led by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), the initial plan was developed by a collaborative group of state agencies called the WPP Interagency Work Group (IWG). This IWG included the following state agencies:

- Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
- Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
- Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- State Department of Commerce (Commerce)
- Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
- Puget Sound Partnership (PSP)
- State Conservation Commission (WSCC)
- State Parks
- Department of Agriculture

The IWG also received valuable input from local governments, tribal governments, Washington residents, and federal agencies.

Below are some of the highlights of the activities implemented during the 2015-2021 period. Appendix A (2015-2021 Implementation Schedule: Update on Progress) includes the activities that were identified as high priority in a table format in the context of relevant WPP core elements.

Core element - Regulatory

- Ecology provided technical assistance[5] and comments on Critical Areas Ordinances (CAO) for 142 local governments since 2016. This supports local governments in developing ordinances that lay the framework for wetland protection in communities across the state.
- Ecology developed and expanded Clean Water Action Section 401 and wetland enforcement boilerplates, established protocols for intra-agency review of enforcement actions, and convened quarterly meetings to coordinate enforcement efforts within its Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program and with other agencies.
- Ecology's wetland mitigation compliance program[6] began in 2006. For wetland permits issued by Ecology from 2015 to 2021, the program has tracked approximately 72 projects with traditional mitigation requirements, and 94 projects using alternative migration such as mitigation bank credits, advance mitigation, or in-lieu fee credits. Ecology provides recommendations in follow-up correspondences from site inspections; reviews as-built and monitoring reports; tracks deadlines; and ensures as-built and monitoring reports have complete information per Ecology's authorization.

  The mitigation compliance program includes site inspections at several stages: as-built, after the mitigation project is first completed; mid-monitoring; and at project closeout (typically 10 years). At closeout, the site inspection informs whether the site has met its goals, objectives, and performance standards. As of June 2021, approximately 269 site visits were conducted during the period of the plan.
- As of December 2021, five new mitigation banks[7] were certified since the implementation of the WPP in 2015:
  - Weatherwax (Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor County)
  - Coweeman Joint Clean Water Act (CWA)/Endangered Species Act (ESA) (Kelso, Cowlitz County)
  - Terrace (Vancouver, Clark County)
  - Keller Farm (Redmond, King County)
  - Upper Clear Creek Joint CWA/ESA (Port of Tacoma, Pierce County).

[5] https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/wetlands/regulations/local-regulations
[6] https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Wetlands/Mitigation/Compliance
[7] https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/wetlands/mitigation/wetland-mitigation-banking/mitigation-bank-projects

Core element - Voluntary restoration and protection

Ecology coordinates with partners to obtain funding through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Coastal Wetlands Conservation (NCWC) grant program[8] for acquisition and/or restoration projects. Ecology has helped conserve and restore over 4,000 acres of coastal wetlands, received 21 grants totaling $18 million, and applied for another $5 million of new funding for seven projects in 2019. Specifically, from 2016-2019:

- 21 grants awarded.
- $18 million in NCWC funding received.
- 36 properties acquired.
- 3,510 acres acquired.
- 5 restoration projects.
- 497 acres restored.

Using the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Grants,[9] Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has protected the only known raised bog[10] in the western contiguous USA. The bog was identified through the Washington Natural Heritage Program[11] (WNHP) as a result of EPA-funded work.

The Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) funded numerous projects designed to preserve and enhance wetlands. Twenty-six separate projects were funded from 2015 through 2020. Actions included restoration of Britt Slough in Skagit County, Saltese Flats wetland protection and restoration in Spokane County, and Mud Bay salt marsh restoration in San Juan County. Twenty-two were completed and four remain active.

[8] https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/payments-contracts-grants/grants-loans/find-a-grant-or-loan/wetlands-conservation-grants
[9] https://rco.wa.gov/grant/washington-wildlife-and-recreation-program-recreation/
[10] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/CrowberryBog
[11] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/natural-heritage-program

Core element - Monitoring and assessment

Significant progress was made under the Monitoring and Assessment core element. Throughout the plan period, Ecology led a semi-monthly statewide monitoring and assessment workgroup. The workgroup is composed of representatives from state and federal agencies, local governments, tribes, and academia. Specific accomplishments include:

- Continued current and completed additional phases of Level 1 analyses of landscape-scale changes using NAIP-based land-cover change analyses, specifically through WDFW's High Resolution Change Detection[12] analysis and NOAA's Coastal Change Analysis Program.[13]

- Multiple agencies/partners (UW, WNHP, Ecology, USFWS, EPA) worked under an EPA Wetland Grant/Cooperative Agreement to develop improved modeled wetland layers and Federal Geographic Data Committee-compliant updated NWI maps for 2 pilot areas (Puyallup River Basin and Kittitas County). This work included adding Landscape position, Landform, Water flow path, and Waterbody Type classification and WA HGM classes to generate NWI+ data for the updated maps in these two demonstration areas.

- The UW, under contract to Ecology, produced improved remotely sensed maps with wetland/upland probability values. UW also worked with TerrainWorks under funding from WDNR's Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research (CMER) committee to develop the Wetland Intrinsic Potential Tool (WIP).

- Several tribes in Washington State (Colville, Tulalip, Quinault) worked on updating their wetland inventory maps. The Tulalip Tribe hired an expert from the USFWS NWI staff to work for them and update their wetland maps with detailed field survey site verifications.

- Ecology and WDNR staff participated in EPA's 2016 and 2021 National Wetland Condition Assessment[14] (NWCA).

WNHP completed significant work supporting the Monitoring and Assessment objectives. Specifically, they:

- Continued surveys of Wetlands of High Conservation Value (WHCV)[15] across the state (funded by EPA Wetland Program Development Grant [WPDG]).

[12] https://hrcd-wdfw.hub.arcgis.com/
[13] https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/ccapregional.html
[14] https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/wetlands/tools-resources/national-wetland-condition-assessment
[15] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_nh_advance_transfer_wetland_data.pdf

- Developed a Reference Standard Wetland Network for Washington State[16] (based on U.S National Vegetation Classification).
- Developed an online map viewer[17] for WHCV (funded by EPA WPDG).
- Finalized wetland Ecological Integrity Assessment forms and manuals.[18]
- Documented the ecological characteristics and baseline conditions of the only known raised bog[19] in the western, conterminous United States.
- Began assessing land use impacts to Puget lowland bogs (ongoing, funded by EPA WPDG).
- Tested the efficacy of the Floristic Quality Assessment to measure current ecological integrity of wetlands (ongoing, funded by EPA WPDG).
- Began developing ecological impact rankings for Washington's nonnative plants (ongoing, funded by EPA WPDG).
- Began assessing ecosystem conditions (including wetlands) on Columbia Land Trust conservation properties using Ecological Integrity Assessments.[20]
- Assessed ecosystem conditions (including wetlands) on Washington State Parks using Ecological Integrity Assessments (ongoing, funded by Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission).
- Used the U.S. National Vegetation Classification (USNVC) to draft updates to the vegetation classification of Washington's wetland and riparian areas.
- Revised the USNVC Classification (both upland and wetland vegetation) of Mount Rainier, Olympic, and North Cascades National Parks.[21] Also see the previously published USNVC Classification (both upland and wetland vegetation) of San Juan Island National Historical Park.[22]
- Began assessing impacts of management actions benefitting a federally-listed plant species to the ecological integrity of wet prairies.[23]
- Published Ecological Integrity Assessments to Inform Prioritization of Protection and Restoration Actions and Monitor Progress in the Puget Sound Region.[24]

[16] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_nh_ref_wetland_final.pdf
[17] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHPwetlandviewer
[18] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHP-EIA
[19] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/CrowberryBog
[20] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_nh_clt_eia_report.pdf
[21] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_nh_veg_natl_parks_2021.pdf
[22] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_nh_san_juan_veg.pdf
[23] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_nh_lomatium_lacamas_recovery.pdf
[24] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_nh_eia_puget_sound_region.pdf

Core element - Outreach and education

Washington's Coastal Training Program[25] (CTP), administered through the Padilla Bay National Estuary Research Reserve, offered numerous training and education courses on managing coastal, estuarine, and wetland resources over the six-year period of the 2015 WPP. Most courses were presented multiple times and included the following:

- Coastal Inundation Mapping
- Eelgrass Delineation
- Grass, Sedge, and Rush Identification for Western WA Puget Lowland Habitats
- Plant Identification in Central and Eastern Washington Habitats
- Winter Tree and Shrub Identification for Western WA Puget Lowland Habitats
- Using the Field Indicators for Hydric Soils
- Designing and Installing Mitigation and Restoration Projects
- How to Determine the Ordinary High Water Mark in Western WA
- How to Determine the Ordinary High Water Mark in Eastern WA
- Planning for Protection and Restoration of Eelgrass Habitats
- Selecting Wetland Mitigation Sites Using a Watershed Approach
- Using the Credit-Debit Method for Estimating Mitigation Needs
- Using the Washington State Wetland Rating System (2014) in Western WA
- Using the Washington State Wetland Rating System (2014) in Eastern WA

Many of the classes offered through the CTP were modified in response to COVID-19 to allow for remote learning in 2020. This included converting all the in-class materials to a format appropriate for online presentation and creating videos to support field activities when the instructors and participants were not able to meet in the field. This hybrid method of instruction will continue for the foreseeable future.

Washington Natural Heritage Program (WNHP) staff led field trips, provided presentations to citizen groups, and helped students in wetland-related research. For example, WNHP staff:

- Presented various talks about Washington's peatlands to the Central Puget Sound Chapter and the South Sound Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society including their 2019

[25] https://coastaltraining-wa.org/

Study Weekend (Keynote talk), and Washington Native Plant Society's Native Plant Appreciation Month Online Events (2021).

- Led field trips to DNR Natural Areas (Crowberry Bog Natural Area Preserve, North Bay Natural Area Preserve) and other wetland sites for Washington Native Plant Society, Native Plant Salvage Foundation, and U.S. Army Corp of Engineer/WA Department of Ecology staff.

- Provided periodic assistance (provided data, consultation, site recommendations, etc.) to university students for their research efforts.

Activities involving multiple core elements

The WNHP Data Explorer[26] was launched, which displays data for wetland and upland rare plants and ecosystems. It replaced the Wetlands of High Conservation Value Map Viewer.[27] (Core elements – Regulatory, Voluntary Restoration and Protection, Monitoring and Assessment)

Ecology and WNHP staff assessed wetlands sampled for the 2021 National Wetland Condition Assessment[28] (NWCA) using the methods of the WA Wetland Rating System and Level 2 EIA with funding from EPA. Results will be compared with results from NWCA and used to understand how WA wetland ratings, EIA, and NWCA wetland assessments perform in relation to each other. A QAPP was developed for applying wetland ratings and EIA to NWCA sites. (Core elements – Regulatory, Monitoring and Assessment)

With funding from an EPA WPDG, Ecology and WNHP generated curriculum for a new class on wetland classification that was offered through the CTP. They taught a pilot class in October 2019 and revised the class materials based on feedback from the pilot. In response to COVID-19 they revised the class materials to offer an entirely online class through Coastal Training in December 2020. They also generated on-demand modules for each of the classification systems covered in the training that are available on Ecology's Wetland education & training resources[29] web page. (Core elements – Monitoring and Assessment, Outreach and Education)

WSDOT's ongoing wetlands ecology and monitoring techniques internship program[30] promotes wetland science and management and supports the education and growth of new wetland professionals. This program was inadvertently left out from the 2015 WPP. It has been and will continue to be an important, ongoing activity. (Core elements – Regulatory, Monitoring and Assessment)

[26] https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/174566100f2a47bebe56db3f0f78b5d9/page/Home/
[27] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHPwetlandviewer
[28] https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/wetlands/tools-resources/national-wetland-condition-assessment
[29] https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Wetlands/Education-training
[30] https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/employment/internships/wetlands-ecology-monitoring-techniques-internship

2023 Update (2023-2029)

Overview

The goal of the state's wetland program remains to achieve no overall net loss in area and function of Washington's remaining wetlands and to further the long-term goal to increase the quantity and quality of Washington's wetlands resource base. The Wetland Program Plan will continue to be used to meet these goals by:

- Increasing coordination among and between state agencies, local governments, tribal governments, federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations.
- Applying for grant funding to finance activities and actions that promote the goals.
- Addressing gaps in the state wetland program.

Thus, this update is a targeted action to address discrete sections of the plan, while purposefully retaining and recommitting to existing objectives, actions, and activities.

The Monitoring and Assessment Core Element includes an action to update the WPP and submit it for re-approval (Goal 2, Objective 1, Action 6). Consistent with the activity associated with this action, Ecology staff engaged in a mid-plan review meeting with EPA staff in 2019. After this review, Ecology convened the Interagency Work Group (IWG) to collaborate on an update to the plan. While the original goal was to submit the update in 2020, staffing limitations delayed the start of the update process.

Participants in the IWG for the update included representatives from the following state agencies, organizations, and tribes:

- Department of Ecology
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Department of Transportation
- State Department of Commerce
- Recreation and Conservation Office
- State Conservation Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Department of Agriculture
- Pacific Northwest Tribal Wetlands Working Group
- Snoqualmie Tribe
- Tulalip Tribe

From March 2020 through January 2021, the IWG met to discuss the results and accomplishments of the plan during its first six years (2015-2021), and to scope an update to the plan.

Many program elements include actions and activities that are best described as ongoing and "regular business," for example:

- Continue to coordinate among agencies, programs, industry, tribal governments, and local governments to reduce duplicative efforts and increase consistency (Regulatory, Objective 1, Action 5).
- Continue to provide technical assistance to local governments (Regulatory, Objective 1, Action 6).
- Use mitigation banking and in-lieu fee programs for compensatory mitigation (Regulatory, Objective 3, Action 1).
- Continuing to expand the use and development of watershed/landscape scale planning tools (Voluntary Restoration, Objective 1, Action 4).

The IWG concurred that the existing plan is very comprehensive and continues to address the majority of Washington's Wetland Program. Therefore, to preserve its history and retain continuity of purpose, the contents of the 2015 WPP are carried forward by reference into this 2023 update.

Though the 2015 WPP addresses a majority of the wetland program actions and activities, the IWG identified additional actions and activities that needed to be incorporated into the WPP. Also, some actions and activities, which emerged as priorities over the past six years, were promoted to the implementation schedule for 2023-2029. Those additions fell within existing core elements and are reflected in Appendix B (2023-2029 Implementation Schedule).

Changes and additions

Changes and updates to specific Core Element Actions or Activities are captured in the 2023-2029 Implementation Schedule in Appendix B. A narrative explanation of the new Core Element Actions or Activities is provided below.

In general, changes and additions fell under three Core Elements, as follows:

- Regulatory
- Voluntary restoration and protection
- Monitoring and assessment

In particular, the Regulatory core element was augmented in response to shifts in federal regulations and authorities. Fluctuations in federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act (CWA), along with a new procedural rule on Section 401 pursuant to the CWA, have increased the regulatory burden on the state and created uncertainty moving forward. This new burden requires the state to examine, augment, and revise its regulatory approach and capacity.

Washington will continue to identify priorities for conservation, restoration, and actions to address emerging environmental threats such as climate change, sea level rise, and invasive species (e.g., European green crab, Emerald Ash Borer).

In addition, as funding becomes available, Washington intends to expand its efforts in Monitoring and Assessment, including updating our wetland mapping resources, developing and implementing Quality Assurance approaches for WPP elements that require them, and evaluating the success of voluntary restoration projects.

Washington also added sections addressing environmental justice and climate change as activities that involves multiple core elements.

As previously noted, the majority of the six Core Elements and the associated Core Element Action Tables will continue to be attributes of Washington's WPP. The following subsections discuss some of the proposed activities for the 2023-2029 implementation period. Appendix B (2023-2029 Implementation Schedule) includes a list of the activities that were identified as high priority in a table format in the context of relevant WPP core elements.

Core element - Regulatory

Waters of the United States

Regulatory uncertainty at the federal level has created challenges for Washington over the last few years and may continue to do so in the immediate future. Beginning in 2017 and extending into 2021, Washington spent significant time and resources commenting on and adapting to the 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule.[31] Under the Navigable Waters Protection rule, at least 29% of wetlands and 14% of streams in Washington lost federal protection. The state identified an important need to develop capacity and processes[32] to address wetland impacts no longer regulated as Waters of the United States (WOTUS) under that rule.

While projects affecting non-federally regulated wetlands and waters may no longer need federal Clean Water Act permits, they must still meet state laws, such as the state Water Pollution Control Act (RCW 90.48), Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58), and Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A), and other state environmental regulations.

[31] https://www.epa.gov/wotus/navigable-waters-protection-rule
[32] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2306012.html

Washington has been an active participant in the listening sessions and workshops aimed at crafting a durable definition of WOTUS. The state is allocating staff resources to contribute information and ideas to the discussions, with an expressed preference for a regionalized approach to determining WOTUS.

Clean Water Act Section 401

Like the regulatory challenges and uncertainty cited above, Washington has needed to develop process guidance, forms, and permit templates to address regulatory changes associated with the 2020 Clean Water Action Section 401 Certification Rule.[33] Ecology continues to work on this aspect of regulatory authority, adding staff to address the increase in procedural processes that the 2020 rule created.

Under EPA's new 401 rule, all project proponents requesting a Section 401 water quality certification must first file a pre-filing meeting request with Ecology at least 30 days before submitting a 401 water quality certification request. However, effective September 11, 2020, all requests must follow additional steps to begin the 401 water quality certification review and decision process.

In addition, Washington has two different sets of Nationwide Permit responses, with disparate sets of conditions, which were approved by the Corps under different administrations. As a result, in several situations Ecology needs to issue individual Section 401 authorizations for projects that previously would have received a streamlined Nationwide Permit. With the loss of the ability to employ the Nationwide Permit program more broadly, Ecology continues to develop streamlined review processes to produce timely decisions while ensuring projects do not violate state law.

Each of the above changes increased workload for Ecology, necessitating procedural changes, additional training, possible rulemaking, and the development of new informational materials for the public.

To address the regulatory challenges associated with WOTUS and Clean Water Act Section 401 changes at the federal level, Washington will implement the following Regulatory Objectives:

- 1.2. Implement regulatory activities according to a clear and effective set of criteria for reviewing and responding to applications to streamline the review process.
    - Develop screening factor guidance to facilitate review of projects with small impacts to low functioning wetlands.
    - New Activity 7: Develop and implement criteria for screening applications to evaluate the most effective and efficient permit pathway.
- 1.5. Continue to coordinate among agencies, programs, industry, tribal governments, and local governments to reduce duplicative efforts and increase consistency.

[33] https://www.epa.gov/cwa-401/2020-clean-water-act-section-401-certification-rule-0

    - New Activity 4: Actively participate in work groups, listening sessions, hearings, etc. related to the development and implementation of federal rules and guidance.
- 4.3. Modify regulatory program as needed.
    - Develop state capacity and processes to address wetland impacts no longer regulated as Waters of the United States (WOTUS).
    - Develop procedures and templates for processing authorization requests for projects proposing to impact non-federally regulated waters pursuant to RCW 90.48.
    - Develop permit templates to address regulatory changes associated with 2020 Section 401 Rule. Templates will include necessary references to state rule and law providing authority and specificity to support water quality conditions attached to 401 authorizations.

Stream function assessment

Washington is actively exploring modifying the Stream Function Assessment Method[34] (SFAM), for use in Washington. Initially developed by EPA for use in Oregon, SFAM is composed of four components (User Manual, Excel Workbook, Scientific Rationale, and web-based SFAM Map Viewer), which together meet the requirements of a rapid, repeatable, consistent, defensible, and science-based method for assessing streams in support of compensatory mitigation decision making.

Washington administers several stream-related regulatory authorities, including the Hydraulic Code (RCW 77.55), Water Pollution Control Act (RCW 90.48), Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58), and Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A). These laws and rules include consideration of best available science when establishing and administering regulations to protect critical area functions and values. Currently, no quantitative method exists for evaluating stream functions and values for regulatory purposes in Washington.

EPA developed SFAM with consideration of its transferability. In its current form, many measures are applicable to Washington, because the standard performance indices for each of the function measures considered data, literature, and current scientific understanding of stream system function from across the Pacific Northwest. However, certain Washington-specific data layers would need to be incorporated. (Core element: Regulatory Objective 4, Action 4, Activity 2.)

[34] https://www.oregon.gov/dsl/WW/Pages/SFAM.aspx

Develop guidance for methods for monitoring mitigation, including innovative methods

Pursuant to an EPA WPDG, Ecology will develop monitoring guidance for wetland compensation sites, thereby informing site management to improve compliance and ecological success.

The main objective of this project is to develop monitoring guidance for wetland compensatory mitigation sites in the state of Washington. The monitoring guidance will provide a solid foundation for state and local governments to demonstrate expectations that are defensible and verifiable. It will also allow Washington state agencies to be better positioned to answer the questions addressed in Module 1 (Compensatory Mitigation Site Performance) of EPA's proposed mitigation evaluation framework. (Core element: Regulatory 3.3.)

Core element - Voluntary restoration and protection

Support and coordinate with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)

RCO, established in 1964 by citizen's initiative, plays a very important role in conservation and recreation within the state. Having one of the larger capital budgets in state government, RCO passes through millions of state and federal dollars to partners, who in turn use the grants to complete significant projects throughout Washington.

Funding is provided for parks, trails, beaches, boating facilities, wildlife habitat, restoration of salmon habitat, and preservation of farm and forestlands. RCO's role is to not only distribute funding but to ensure the projects are accurately implemented and remain in place into the future as defined in the grant agreement. As such, RCO maintains a database of funded projects[35] that can serve as a basis for assessment of restoration outcomes.

State agencies charged with ensuring no net loss (NNL) of wetland area and functions can benefit from coordination with RCO's tracking of restoration projects. Such projects may serve to demonstrate that Washington is achieving NNL and may be increasing wetland area and function over time. (Core element: Voluntary Restoration and Protection Objective 3, Action 1, Activities 1 and 2.)

Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda

The Puget Sound Action Agenda charts the course to recovery of our nation's largest estuary–it complements and incorporates the work of many partners from around Puget Sound to describe regional strategies and specific actions needed to recover Puget Sound. These

[35] https://rco.wa.gov/project-search/

strategies and actions provide opportunities for federal, state, local, tribal, and private entities to better invest resources and coordinate actions.

In particular, the Near-Term Actions (NTAs) provide opportunity for increased agency coordination in support of these actions. See the Puget Sound Action Agenda web page[36] for a list of NTAs.

WDFW implements the Puget Sound Strategic Initiative for habitat. NTAs under that strategic initiative may involve wetland-related projects and research. Agencies will also participate in the Puget Sound Partnership-led discussion focused on future wetland-related indicator reporting. (Core element: Voluntary Restoration and Protection Objective 1, Action 1, Activity 1.)

Supporting incentive-based approaches to restoration and protection

With over 60% of Washington's land base in private ownership, incentive programs support and enhance many of the voluntary conservation efforts in Washington. Several government and private, non-profit foundation programs offer incentives to private landowners in Washington to promote conservation, protection, or improvement of wetland resources on their property. These range from direct financial incentives, like tax breaks, grants, or subsidized loans, to recognition-based incentives that reward landowners for pursuing conservation activities. In addition to these programs, many of the organizations and agencies provide technical assistance in applying for grants or loans, developing conservation plans, and providing regulatory assistance.

Incentives can be incorporated into regulatory programs. Under the GMA, local governments are responsible for designating and protecting wetlands by adopting development regulations to protect critical areas,[37] and are encouraged to augment regulatory protection with incentives for voluntary conservation. (Core element: Voluntary Restoration and Protection Objective 2, Action 2, Activity 4.)

Core element - Monitoring and assessment

Continue development of the Monitoring & Assessment Strategy

Washington State currently convenes a Monitoring and Assessment workgroup that has resulted in valuable information exchange and increased collaboration among local, state and federal agencies, tribes, academia, and other stakeholders. The Monitoring and Assessment workgroup continues to operate through a broad, collaborative approach that supports

[36] https://actionagenda.pugetsoundinfo.wa.gov/
[37] https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/growth-management-topics/critical-areas/

different management, monitoring, and protection goals. The overall goal of the wetland monitoring and assessment strategy is:

> To establish the extent and types of wetlands, their level of function and condition, to detect changes and stressors, and to characterize trends over time to inform better decision making.

Monitor voluntary restoration and protection projects

To further the long-term WPP goal to increase the quantity and quality of Washington's wetlands resource base, funding agencies may explore monitoring strategies for voluntary restoration projects whereby restored wetland area and, potentially, functions are documented. This action overlaps with the Voluntary Restoration and Protection program element.

Develop and continue to support web-based tools

Ecology will consolidate existing web-based spatial information by adding a dedicated wetland element in the Coastal Atlas[38] so that data are easily accessible by users. (Core element: Monitoring and Assessment Goal 1, Objective 1, Action 4, Activity 3.)

Supported by an EPA WPDG, Ecology, with input from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), will develop and implement a web-based tool to assist applicants with completing the Washington State Wetland Rating System forms and figures. This tool is discussed more in "Activities involving multiple core elements."

DNR will continue to support the Wetlands of High Conservation Value web viewer,[39] which was recently updated to incorporate all its element occurrence data. The web viewer was renamed to the WNHP Data Explorer to indicate its more comprehensive representation of those data.

Update monitoring guidance and wetland assessment tools

Monitoring guidance

- The Department of Commerce CAO handbook will be updated to include a section addressing monitoring of critical area permits.
- Ecology will develop monitoring guidance for mitigation sites, per a recent EPA WPDG.

[38] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/coastalatlas/Default.aspx
[39] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHPdataexplorer

Assessment tools

Ecology will update the following wetland assessment tools to meet accessibility requirements, user needs, and annotate them to provide improved clarity.

- Washington State Wetland Rating System for Eastern and Western Washington, 2014 Update[40]
- Calculating Credits and Debits for Compensatory Mitigation in Wetlands of Eastern and Western Washington[41]
- Selecting Wetland Mitigation Sites Using a Watershed Approach (Eastern and Western Washington)[42]

Also, in support of VSP, and in coordination with NRCS and the Conservation Commission, Ecology will investigate an NRCS method to monitor wetland change in areas of agricultural intersect. The method would support the necessary monitoring elements of the VSP.

Evaluate the success of mitigation

If funding allows, regulatory agencies will assess mitigation sites with a focus on using aspects of EPA's Mitigation Evaluation Framework[43] to evaluate efficacy and success of the state's mitigation program and ecological success of mitigation sites. In addition, Ecology will assist EPA Region 10 with its re-assessment of historic mitigation sites. (Core element: Monitoring and Assessment Goal 1, Objective 2, Action 3 and Regulatory Objective 4, Action 1.)

Core element - Outreach and education

State agencies will continue to work with the Coastal Training Program (CTP) to provide wetland-specific training as identified in the CTP strategic plan. The CTP will continue to adapt training methods and strategies to respond to the shift to mostly virtual training (in response to COVID 19). A full list of scheduled classes is available on the Coastal Training Program web page.[44]

Additional expanded education and outreach efforts are foreseeable in the next WPP period. Ecology is expanding its Washington Conservation Corps wetland delineation training to a four-day class. Course content includes application of the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual and Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Regional Supplement used by the Army Corps of Engineers, Ecology, and local governments to delineate wetlands. The course examines the

[40] https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Wetlands/Tools-resources/Rating-systems
[41] https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Wetlands/Tools-resources/Credit-debit-method
[42] https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Wetlands/Mitigation
[43] https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-03/mitigationevaluationframework-2022.pdf
[44] https://coastaltraining-wa.org/

technical guidelines for wetland delineations, field indicators of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology, and an overview of wetland regulation in Washington.

Ecology is also in the process of developing and offering training and education materials in support of the updated interagency wetland mitigation guidance. The guidance was published in early 2021 and was reflected as a priority item in the 2015 WPP.

As a result of the several additional foreseeable trainings, and Washington's ongoing commitment to education and outreach, we are adding a Desired Outcome:

> **New Outreach and Education Objective 4:** Consultants correctly and accurately employ agency tools and guidance in support of regulatory processes.

Activities involving multiple core elements

Environmental justice

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and has equitable access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

All Washington residents, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, color, or national origin, have a right to live, work, and recreate in a clean and healthy environment. Low-income communities, communities of color, and indigenous people in Washington and across the country often bear the brunt of pollution and the impacts of climate change. We're committed to making decisions that do not place disproportionate environmental burdens on these communities.

The first statewide law[45] (RCW 70A.02, known as the HEAL Act) to create a coordinated and inclusive approach to environmental justice was passed by the Washington Legislature in 2021. Seven Washington State agencies that develop policies and programs that most directly impact environmental justice must comply with the HEAL Act:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Ecology
- Department of Health
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Transportation
- Puget Sound Partnership

Other state agencies can also voluntarily comply with the HEAL Act.

The agencies are committed to integrating environmental justice into strategic plans and decision-making processes. For example, shortly after the HEAL act went into place, Ecology's Office of Equity & Environmental Justice[46] was established. This office leads the agency's strategy to reduce pollution and health disparities in communities most at risk. This office also

[45] https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.02
[46] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Who-we-are/Our-Programs/Equity-Environmental-Justice

helps identify governmental barriers for at-risk communities and determines how we can remove those barriers.

Environmental justice considerations will be incorporated into review of wetland program publications, actions, and decisions. Washington acknowledges that EPA is currently developing guidance on how to integrate environmental justice into Wetland Program Plans. We will incorporate EPA-recommended elements of environmental justice into future iterations of this plan.

Under the 1989 State/Tribal Centennial Accord and the 2012 State/Tribal Relations Act (Chapter 122, Laws of 2012), Washington maintains a government-to-government relationship with tribes. We are fully committed to the principals of government-to-government consultation and cooperation with tribes consistent with our mission to protect, preserve, and enhance Washington's environment, and promote the wise management of our land, air, and water for the benefit of current and future generations.

Climate change

The Washington Legislature directed Ecology and other state agencies to develop an integrated climate change response strategy[47] for state agencies, local governments, public and private businesses, and nongovernmental organizations. These strategies are intended to guide preparation for, address, and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Guiding principles for Washington's climate change response strategy:

- Use best-available science.
- Build on principles of sustainability.
- Increase our resilience and protect the most vulnerable populations.
- Ensure integrated approaches that maximize mutual benefits and avoid unintended consequences.
- Emphasize collaboration and strengthen partnerships.
- Recognize the impacts of decisions made by other regions and countries.

Washington's climate change response strategies:

- Protect people and communities most vulnerable to climate impacts by increasing state and local public health capacity to monitor, detect, plan, and respond to emerging threats and climate-related emergencies. Also increase awareness of climate risks among the public and health-care providers.
- Reduce risk of damage to buildings, transportation systems, and other infrastructure. Identify vulnerable areas and take proactive steps to reduce risks to infrastructure, avoid

[47] https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.05

climate risks when siting new infrastructure and planning for growth, and enhance capacity to prepare for more frequent and severe flooding, rising sea levels, wildfires, and changes in energy supply and demand.

- Reduce risks to ocean and coastlines. Help communities prepare for rising sea levels and storm surge and protect people and property. Prevent the degradation of habitats and create opportunities for upland habitat creation. Reduce shellfish vulnerability by reducing land-based contributions of carbon and polluted runoff to the marine environment.
- Improve water management by promoting integrated approaches that consider future water supply and address competing water demands for irrigated crops, fish, municipal and domestic water needs, and energy generation. Implement enhanced water conservation and efficiency programs and incorporate climate change realities into agency decision making.
- Reduce forest and agriculture vulnerability by enhancing surveillance of pests and disease. Promote and transition to species that are resilient to changing climate conditions, conserve productive and adaptive forest and farmland, and reduce forest and wildland fire risk in vulnerable areas.
- Safeguard fish, wildlife, habitat, and ecosystems and improve the ability of wildlife to migrate to more suitable habitat as the climate shifts. Protect and restore habitat and sensitive and vulnerable species. Reduce existing stresses from development, pollution, unsustainable harvest, and other factors.
- Support the efforts of local communities and strengthen capacity to respond and engage the public. Identify existing and new funding mechanisms to support adaptation work at the local level, and ensure a coordinated and integrated approach among levels of government and society. Support research and monitoring and ensure scientific information is accessible and responds to needs of decision-makers.

There are numerous actions in Washington State's Integrated Climate Response Strategy[48] that specifically address wetlands. For example, two actions are recommended in the section on "Recommended Adaptation Strategies and Actions—Ecosystems, Species, and Habitats:"

> Strategy B-1. Conserve habitat necessary to support healthy fish, wildlife, and plant populations and ecosystem functions in a changing climate, and protect connectivity areas between critical habitats to allow the movement of species in response to climate change.
>
> > Action 5: Protect and restore high-quality freshwater habitat through the reintroduction of beavers, **wetland mitigation and creation**, groundwater recharge, flow augmentation, and protection of coldwater springs.
>
> Strategy B-2. Reduce non-climate stressors to help fish, wildlife, plants, and ecosystems be more resilient to the effects of climate change.

[48] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/1201004.html

> Action 4. Restore riparian zones, estuaries, **wetlands**, and floodplains by implementing appropriate conservation, restoration, and other land stewardship actions and practices, such as mitigation banking.

Washington's wetland program will support the actions of the state's climate response strategy through implementation of WPP activities.

Support Washington's Voluntary Stewardship Program

The Voluntary Stewardship Program[49] (VSP) provides an alternative, incentive-based approach for counties to address fundamental goals of the state's Growth Management Act (GMA) to:

> "Protect and enhance critical areas within the area where agricultural activities are conducted, while maintaining and improving the long-term viability of agriculture in the state of Washington and reducing the conversion of farmland to other uses." (RCW 36.70A.700)

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is an alternative planning process that uses incentives instead of regulations to promote environmental stewardship on agricultural lands. Counties that opted-in to this program were eligible for funding for the development of watershed work plans to set goals and benchmarks for protection and enhancement of wetlands and other critical areas on agricultural lands. All 27 counties with VSP work plans are eligible for ongoing funding for program implementation.

Several state agencies are involved in helping VSP watersheds achieve compliance with clean water requirements and protect and restore critical areas. The Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) oversees and administers funding for counties to develop and implement VSP work plans.

As members of the State-level VSP Technical Panel, Ecology, WDFW, Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA), and the SCC attend regular meetings and review periodic reports submitted by participating counties. Ecology and WDFW have also provided outreach and education on the use of agency tools (e.g., Water Quality Atlas, High Resolution Change Detection). Ecology will coordinate with NRCS and the Conservation Commission on the implementation of an NRCS-developed wetland monitoring tool for use in VSP. The Conservation Commission has developed Monitoring Guidance for Critical Areas that intersect with agricultural areas. The Commission will also provide symposia on the use of the above-mentioned tools and guidance. (Core elements: Regulatory Objective 1, Action 6**,** Voluntary Restoration and Protection Objective 1, Action 3; and Monitoring & Assessment Objective 1, Action 2.)

[49] https://www.scc.wa.gov/vsp

Develop and implement web-based wetland rating tool

Supported by an EPA WPDG, Ecology, with input from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), will develop and implement a web-based tool to assist applicants with completing the Washington State Wetland Rating System forms and figures. The rating system is a coarse-scale, Level 2 wetland assessment tool used to categorize wetlands into four categories based on their sensitivity to disturbance, their rarity, their ability to be replaced, and the functions they provide. Ecology updated the rating systems in October 2014 and the only method for completing the rating system at this time is a paper form.

The web-based tool, the Washington Tool for Online Rating (WATOR), has been available to users in a beta form for testing, including as a component of the Wetland Rating System training offered through the Coastal Training Program. Ecology will officially release WATOR in conjunction with Version 2 of the Washington Wetland Rating System 2014 Update manuals for eastern and western Washington.

(Regulatory Objective 1, Action 6, Activity 4; Monitoring and Assessment Objective 2, Action 2; Outreach and Education Objective 3, Desired Outcome 6.)

Develop and implement QA procedures for select wetland program activities

Agencies will develop and implement Quality Assurance approaches for WPP activities as projects require them. These include the development of Quality Assurance Project Plans for projects that generate new environmental data, analyze existing environmental data, or model environmental conditions.

Appendix A. 2015-2021 Implementation Schedule: Update on Progress

This table lists high priority activities that were identified for implementation from 2015-2021, depending on funding and resource availability. If there is a check in the ongoing column, the associated activity was implemented from 2015-2021 and is expected to continue.

For highlights of additional activities implemented from 2015-2021, refer to the text, Retrospective (2015-2021).

The leads, co-leads, and supporters listed in this table are predominately state agencies and it is not all inclusive. Federal agencies are not included although they were involved in several activities, specifically in updating the 2006 Interagency Wetland Mitigation Guidance. Local governments were also involved in multiple activities although they are listed only once on the table. Other organizations were involved to varying degrees.

Core element - Regulatory

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Continue to update, develop, and implement enforcement and compliance mechanisms, guidelines, and resources.	Regulatory 1.3.1	Ecology; WDFW	✓	Ecology has developed and expanded wetland/401 enforcement boilerplates, established protocols for intra-agency review of enforcement actions (EAR) and convened quarterly meetings to coordinate enforcement efforts in the SEA program and with other agencies.
Continue to provide technical assistance to local governments in developing and administering wetland regulations.	Regulatory 1.6.1 through 1.6.4	Ecology; - Commerce WDFW WDNR-NHP	✓	Ecology provided technical assistance and CAO comments on 142 local government ordinances since 2016. Ecology's regional wetland specialists regularly provide focused technical assistance to local governments when reviewing wetland delineations, ratings, mitigation plans, enforcement actions, etc. Ecology updated the Wetland Guidance for Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) Updates.[50] This document is an update to the June 2016 Wetland Guidance for CAO updates. It is intended to provide wetland guidance and tools for jurisdictions working on implementing the requirements of Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), specifically, designating and protecting wetland critical areas.

[50] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2206014.html

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
				The Department of Commerce developed and supports a planning tool, PlanView, which provides interested agencies with notification and supporting documents when local governments submit their 60-day notice for impending GMA updates. WDNR-NHP participates in CAO webinars hosted by Commerce to provide technical assistance on use of NHP data in CAOs. WDFW provides technical assistance on their Priority Habitats and Species list, which is used in Ecology's wetland rating system.
Increase focus on violations, and compliance with and enforcement of, permit conditions for impact and mitigation sites, including shorelines: • Continue current wetland mitigation compliance program.	Regulatory 1.3.2	Ecology; WDFW Ecology	 ✓	Ecology staff have followed up on numerous wetland and shoreline violations. For example, Ecology successfully prosecuted a wetland violation in Pierce County resulting in a $90,000 judgment. Ecology's wetland mitigation compliance program is an ongoing program that began in 2006. For Ecology-issued wetland authorizations issued since 2004, the program has tracked approximately 280 projects with traditional mitigation requirements, and 100 projects using alternative mitigation such as mitigation bank credits, advance mitigation, or in-lieu fee credits.

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
• Explore development of a shoreline compliance program.		Ecology		The program includes site inspections at several stages: As-built stage, after the mitigation project is first completed; mid-monitoring; and at project closeout (typically ten years). At closeout, the site inspection informs whether the site has met its goals, objectives, and performance standards. As of June 2021, approximately 269 site visits were conducted during the period of the plan. Ecology provides recommendations in follow-up correspondences from site inspections; reviews reports (as-built and monitoring reports); tracks deadlines; and ensures reports have complete information per Ecology's Order. Ecology's Shoreline Management Section has begun up-staffing efforts for a shoreline compliance program and Ecology's Wetland Section expects to consult/help with development of that program.
Increase use of watershed characterization or other methods to identify key areas to avoid developing: • Continue to apply the Puget Sound Watershed Characterization	Regulatory 2.2.2	Ecology; -WDFW PSP Ecology; WDFW (PHS elements),	 ✓	 City of Duval used a Watershed Characterization tool in their Shoreline Master Program update through an EPA National Estuary Program (NEP) watershed grant.

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
• Develop a watershed characterization model for eastern Washington.		PSP (western WA) Ecology		Multiple Puget Sound jurisdictions used the Watershed Characterization tool in designing and upgrading their stormwater management systems thereby reducing hydrologic impacts to wetlands. Nothing to report.
Use transfer of development rights and other techniques to protect key lands	Regulatory 2.2.4	Commerce; - Puget Sound Regional Council	✓	This is primarily a local planning tool that is employed by jurisdictions that regulate zoning and density (i.e., cities, towns, counties). NEP grants funded several projects by cities looking to develop a program to take in development credits through a TDR program.
Continue to develop state capacity to assist with local comprehensive planning, as needed	Regulatory 2.2.5	Commerce; - WDFW Ecology WDNR-WNHP	✓	Engaging in local government comprehensive planning (e.g., zoning and other land use designations) depends on agency staffing and capacity. Several state agencies indirectly affect these processes through our involvement in CAO & SMP updates, including selectively assisting local governments in watershed-focused CAOs.
Continue to encourage the development and use of mitigation banks and ILF programs and encourage local	Regulatory 3.1.1 & 3.1.2	Ecology;- Local gov'ts WSCC-	✓	Five new mitigation banks certified since 2016: Weatherwax (Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor County), Coweeman Joint CWA/ESA (Kelso, Cowlitz County), Terrace (Vancouver, Clark County), Keller Farm

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
governments to include banking and ILFs as a compensatory mitigation option within their jurisdiction.		Conservation Districts		(Redmond, King County), Upper Clear Creek Joint CWA/ESA (Port of Tacoma, Pierce County). Ecology has been unable to participate in ILF review and development due to staffing constraints. However, Ecology continues to be involved in a more limited way through issuing 401 water quality certifications for the specific mitigation sites when authorized by Corps NWP 27 permits. The 2021 Interagency Wetland Mitigation Guidance[51] includes language on mitigation bank and ILF options. Since 2016, many local governments have included this language on mitigation alternatives in their updated critical areas ordinances.
Update minimum requirements and review criteria for compensatory mitigation as needed: Update the 2006 Interagency Wetland Mitigation Guidance.	Regulatory 3.4.2	Ecology; -Commerce WDFW WSDOT		The update to the 2006 Interagency Wetland Mitigation Guidance was completed under EPA Cooperative Agreement and Wetland Program Development Grant funding. Final publication April 2021.[52]

[51] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2106003.html
[52] Ibid.

Core element – Voluntary restoration and protection

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Establish performance standards based on reference wetland sites: Continue to develop a wetland reference standard network to provide baseline examples for restoration and conservation actions.	Restoration & Protection 1.3.3	WNHP		WNHP maintains a list of reference condition sites that are displayed on their Data Explorer[53] (formerly the Wetlands of High Conservation Value mapper). The vegetation classification developed by the WNHP is referenced in the 2021 interagency wetland mitigation guidance as a resource to inform compensation site planning. The data are also used to guide protection priorities for Washington.

Core element – Monitoring and assessment

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Continue current and complete additional phases of Level 1 analyses of landscape-scale changes using NAIP-based land-cover change analyses.	Monitoring & Assessment 2.1.4	WDFW; -Local gov'ts Ecology	✓	WDFW's High Resolution Land Use Change[54] analysis work. NOAA C-CAP-derived wetland data. Ecology also had a student who summarized change in the C-CAP Modeled Wetland Inventory Data for the period to 2016.

[53] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHPdataexplorer
[54] https://hrcd-wdfw.hub.arcgis.com/

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Participate in EPA's 2016 National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA)	Monitoring & Assessment 2.3.1	Ecology; - UW Burke Herbarium WDNR		Done. 2016 highlights include the following: • Desktop reconnaissance for 69 sites • Field reconnaissance of 22 sites between April and August. • Identification and sampling of 14 replacement sites (from oversample list). • Collected samples at 30 target and 2 resample sites. • Shipped all samples and field data sheets to EPA. Ecology and WNHP staff also participated in the 2021 NWCA. In addition to standard protocols, we assessed wetlands using the methods of the WA Wetland Rating System and Level 2 EIA. Results will be compared with results from NWCA and used to understand how WA wetland ratings, EIA, and NWCA wetland assessments perform in relation to each other. We also developed QAPP for applying wetland ratings and EIA to NWCA sites.

Core element – Outreach and education

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective. Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Produce a field guide to DNR-NHP's wetland and riparian classification	Outreach & Education Objectives 1 & 2 and Idea List	WDNR- NHP; -WDFW -WSCC		WDNR-NHP has drafted wetland and riparian ecosystem and vegetation type guides.[55] Contact WNHP ecologists for current drafts of the following: • Guide to Wetland and Riparian Types of Washington State • Field Guide to Wetland and Riparian Plant Associations of Washington State
Continue to work with the Coastal Training Program (CTP) to provide wetland-specific training as identified in the CTP strategic plan.	Outreach & Education Idea List	Ecology; Coastal Training Program -WDFW -WNHP -Washington Sea Grant -Local governments -PSP	✓	The Department Ecology Wetlands Section is on the CTP Advisory Group and coordinates closely with CTP to offer training classes to professionals working in wetland-related disciplines. The Coastal Training Program[56] offered numerous training and education courses on managing coastal, estuarine, and wetland resources over the six-year period of the 2015 WPP. Due to COVID-19 constraints on in-person learning in 2020 and 2021, the CTP had to adapt training methods and strategies. In-person training materials had to be converted to virtual training formats. For example, field training materials needed to be converted to self-directed

[55] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHPwetlands
[56] https://www.coastaltraining-wa.org/

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective. Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
				activities in the field without instructors present but with a follow-up virtual meeting to go over field activities. There was also a need to provide multi-platform virtual trainings using remote learning with a variety of A/V resources (videos, break-out group activities, etc.). Examples of specific trainings offered include: Wetland ratings trainings, Credit-Debit Method, selecting mitigation sites using a watershed approach, plant ID, OHWM (associated wetlands), and field indicators for hydric soils. Other partners include, Washington Sea Grant (Instructor/Advisory Group), City of Gig Harbor (Instructor/Advisory Group), the Puget Sound Partnership (Advisory Group), the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (instructors), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (instructors), and the Department of Natural Resources (instructors).

Core element – Sustainable financing

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Add capacity to help identify and seek out funding and partnership opportunities.	Sustainable Financing 1.1.1	Ecology WPP Interagency Work Group		Nothing to report.

Activities involving multiple core elements

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Improve wetland mapping and classify wetlands to characterize wetland functions (Level 1 Assessments).	Regulatory 2.2.1 Restoration & Protection 2.1 Monitoring & Assessment 2.1.1 through 2.1.5	Ecology WDNR-WNHP WDFW WSCC		Ecology worked with multiple partners (UW, WNHP, USFWS, EPA) under an EPA Wetland Grant/Cooperative Agreement to develop improved modeled wetland layers and Federal Geographic Data Committee-compliant updated National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) + maps for 2 pilot areas (Puyallup River Basin and Kittitas County). This work included adding Washington Hydrogeomorphic classes to the updated NWI in these two demonstration areas. The UW, under contract to Ecology, produced improved remotely sensed maps with wetland/upland probability values. UW also worked with TerrainWorks under funding from Cooperative

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
				Monitoring, Evaluation and Research committee to develop the Wetland Intrinsic Potential Tool. There are also several tribes in Washington State (Colville, Tulalip, Quinault) working on updating wetland inventory maps. Notably the Tulalip Tribe hired an expert from the USFWS NWI staff to work for them and update their wetland maps with detailed field survey site verifications.
Identify high priority wetlands for protection as it relates to current DNR efforts and future wetland mapping and classification.	Regulatory 2.2.3 Restoration & Protection 2.1.1 through 2.1.3 Monitoring & Assessment 2.1.4 and 2.1.5	WDNR-WNHP Ecology		WNHP has an online Data Explorer which includes the location of rare plant species and rare and high-quality ecosystems, including those that are found within wetland and riparian ecosystems. Those locations that overlap with a wetland are known as "Wetlands of High Conservation Value" within the Wetland Rating System. The WNHP Data Explorer can be used by local jurisdictions, natural resource managers, and/or permit applicants and their consultants. The web mapper helps to identify Wetlands of High Conservation Value and is used when filling out Wetland Rating Forms to help identify Cat I wetlands for those that overlap rare plant or ecosystem data. The map viewer can be used to identify wetland protection priorities and identify reference standard wetland sites.

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Increase capacity of non-Natural Heritage Program scientists to identify Wetlands of High Conservation Value by providing training to agency staff, consultants, and others in using the WDNR-NHP's classification and wetland condition assessment methods.	Monitoring & Assessment 1.4.1 Outreach & Education	WNHP;-Ecology-Coastal Training Program		Ecology and WNHP provided a wetland classification training- pilot class in October 2019. They revised the class materials based on feedback from the pilot training and converted it to an entirely online class to meet COVID restrictions when it was offered through the Coastal Training Program in December 2020. Ecology and WNHP also created shorter on-demand modules of the trainings that were posted on Ecology's wetland education & training resources web page[57]. Prior to collaborating with Ecology on the wetland classification training, WNHP developed a training for their Ecological Integrity Assessment (EIA), incorporating Wetlands of High Conservation Value (WHCV), and offered it through the Coastal Training Program.

[57] https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/wetlands/education-training

WPP plan review

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective. Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Annually review progress of activity implementation with the WPP Interagency Work Group	Periodic Plan Review on page 4	Ecology; WPP Interagency Work Group		Our Wetland Program Plan states that we will meet with the Interagency Work Group and EPA in 2020 for a plan review, and to update the plan for the next planning cycle. The current WPP expired in 2021, however the 2015 WPP continued to be implemented as written during 2022. Ecology did not host an interagency workgroup annual review of the WPP due to lack of staffing. However, Ecology hosts the Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Workgroup (M&A workgroup) semi-monthly and many of the interagency workgroup member agencies participate. The M&A workgroup has been working on developing the M&A Strategy. Though still a draft and in process, the M&A Strategy will be a place that captures more of the priorities and specific actions and activities for the M&A core element of the WPP.
Hold mid-plan review meeting with the EPA.	Program assessment actions 1.6.1	Ecology; WPP Interagency Work Group		Started communication with EPA Seattle and Portland offices in October 2019; convened interagency workgroup including EPA in March 2020. Received input from EPA on Actions/Activities in April 2020 and EPA continued to participate on the interagency workgroup to update and revise the WPP.

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective. Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Ongoing	Progress
Update/renew the plan and submit to EPA for re-approval.	Program assessment actions 1.6.2	Ecology WPP Interagency Work Group		Began work in December 2019 to review the achievements under the 2015-2021 WPP. Ecology re-convened the Interagency Workgroup in March 2020 to update and reflect actions/activities tables with accomplishments. This document serves as the update/renewal of Washington's WPP.

Appendix B. 2023-2029 Implementation Schedule

This table lists priority activities identified for implementation over the next six years (2023-2029), depending on funding and resource availability. Activities or specific items relevant to those activities that were not listed in the 2015 WPP implementation schedule are in **bold** type. Some of these activities may not occur and additional activities may be undertaken as circumstances and resources change. Time frames are either specifically dated or listed as ongoing.

The leads, co-leads, and supporters listed in this table are predominately state agencies, and the list is not all-inclusive. Federal agencies are not included although they may be involved in several activities. Local governments may also be involved in multiple activities although they are listed only once on the table. Other organizations will likely be involved to varying degrees.

Core element - Regulatory

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
Implement regulatory activities according to a clear and effective set of criteria for reviewing and responding to applications to streamline the review process.	**Regulatory 1.2** **New Activity 7**	**Ecology**	**2023-2024**	**Develop and implement criteria for screening applications to evaluate the most effective and efficient permit pathway. Specifically develop screening factor guidance to facilitate review of projects with small impacts to low functioning wetlands.**
Continue to coordinate among agencies, programs, industry, tribal governments, and local governments to reduce duplicative efforts and increase consistency.	**Regulatory 1.5** **New Activity 4**	**Ecology**	**ongoing**	**Actively participate in work groups, listening sessions, hearings, etc. related to the development and implementation of federal rules and guidance.**
Modify regulatory program as needed. **(Modifications are needed to address ongoing changes at the federal level regarding WOTUS, the Section 401 Rule, and the Nationwide Permit Program)**	**Regulatory 4.3**	**Ecology;- Attorney General**	**2023-27**	**Develop state capacity and processes to address wetland impacts no longer regulated as Waters of the United States (WOTUS).** **Develop procedures and templates for processing authorization requests for projects proposing to impact non-federally regulated waters pursuant to RCW 90.48.** **Develop permit templates to address regulatory changes associated with 2020 Section 401 Rule. Templates will include**

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
				necessary references to state rule and law providing authority and specificity to support water quality conditions attached to 401 authorizations.
Develop guidance for applicants on methods for monitoring compliance with requirements, such as performance standards, at mitigation sites.	**Regulatory 3.3**	**Ecology; -WSDOT**	**2023-2025**	**This is an EPA grant-funded project that is currently being implemented. Information on this project can found on Ecology's Wetland mitigation monitoring web page.[58]**
Explore modifying the Stream Functional Assessment Method, developed in Oregon, for use in Washington.	**Regulatory 4.4.2**	**WDFW Ecology**	**2024-2025**	**Pursue funding to develop and implement a plan to modify SFAM for Washington.**
Continue to update, develop, and implement enforcement and compliance mechanisms, guidelines, and resources.	Regulatory 1.3.1	Ecology; WDFW	ongoing	**Evaluate existing enforcement authorities and address gaps.** **Develop an enforcement investigation template to evaluate potential wetland violations.** Continue to use established protocols for intra-agency review of enforcement actions (EAR),

[58] https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/wetlands/mitigation/monitoring-requirements

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
				convene quarterly meetings to coordinate enforcement efforts in Ecology and with other agencies.
Continue to provide technical assistance to local governments in developing and administering wetland regulations.	Regulatory 1.6.1 through 1.6.4	Ecology;- Commerce WDFW WDNR- WNHP State Parks	ongoing	The Growth Management Act (GMA) provides independent enforcement authority to local governments to regulate wetlands in Washington. This activity involves providing technical assistance and comments on Critical Areas Ordinances and Shoreline Master Programs. The foreseeable GMA activities in the six-year period of the updated plan include CAO updates in 23 counties and the cities and towns therein. The Department of Commerce (Commerce) will continue to support critical area regulations updates. Commerce will also maintain and support, PlanView, a planning tool that provides interested agencies with notification and supporting documents when local governments submit their 60-day notice for impending GMA updates. Commerce will also continue to develop the Web Tool for Comprehensive Planning.

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
				Ecology wetland specialists will continue to provide focused technical assistance to local governments when reviewing wetland delineations, ratings, mitigation plans, enforcement actions, etc. **DNR-NHP recently completed a study of land use impacts on Sphagnum-dominated peatlands in the Puget lowlands. The research also includes recommendations for improving regulations, management, and preservation of these rare and sensitive wetlands.**
Increase focus on violations, and compliance with and enforcement of, permit conditions for impact and mitigation sites, including shorelines: • Continue current wetland mitigation compliance program. • Support continued development of a shoreline compliance program.	Regulatory 1.3.2	Ecology; WDFW	ongoing	The wetland mitigation compliance program will continue ongoing evaluation of compensatory mitigation site success. Ecology will continue to coordinate efforts for a Shoreline Management Act compliance program and the Wetland section expects to consult/help with development and implementation of that program.

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
Increase use of watershed characterization or other methods to identify key areas to avoid developing: • Continue to apply the Puget Sound Watershed Characterization	Regulatory 2.2.2	Ecology; -WDFW PSP Ecology; WDFW (PHS elements), PSP (western WA)	ongoing	**Expand training and outreach of Watershed Characterization tool through the Coastal Training Program.**
Continue to develop state capacity to assist with local comprehensive planning, as needed.	Regulatory 2.2.5	Commerce WDFW Ecology	ongoing	Commerce will continue to support use of the Critical Areas Handbook[59] through updating, revising and providing training as needed.
Continue to encourage the development of mitigation banks and ILF programs. Continue to encourage local governments to include banking and ILFs as a compensatory mitigation option within their jurisdiction.	Regulatory 3.1.1 & 3.1.2	Ecology WDFW Tribes Local gov'ts	ongoing	State agencies, tribes and local governments will continue to be involved in the Interagency Review Team for mitigation banks. Ecology will engage on Advance Mitigation efforts through issuing 401 water quality certifications and, possibly, administrative orders, for the specific mitigation sites when authorized by Corps NWP 27 permits.

[59] https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/growth-management-topics/critical-areas/

Core element – Voluntary restoration and protection

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
Coordinate with relevant partners to outline restoration/protection goals, strategies, and timeframes based on agency and partner objectives and on available information.	**Restoration & Protection 1.1.1**	**Puget Sound Partnership Ecology WDFW**	**Ongoing**	**Support Puget Sound Action Agenda and participate in PSP-led discussion focused on future wetland-related indicator reporting.**
Establish performance standards based on reference wetland sites: Continue to develop a wetland reference standard network to provide baseline examples for restoration and conservation actions.	Restoration & Protection 1.3.3	WNHP; -Ecology	2025-26	WNHP maintains a list of reference condition sites that are displayed on their Data Explorer[60] (formerly the Wetlands of High Conservation Value mapper). WNHP will support and update this list of reference condition sites. Ecology will also evaluate incorporation of the vegetation classification developed by WNHP to inform compensation site planning and design, existing conditions, and important preservation or conservation targets.

[60] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHPdataexplorer

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
Provide incentive tools to local governments	**Restoration & Protection 2.2.4**	**Ecology WDFW WDNR Commerce**	**2026-27**	**Promote and highlight incentive-based approaches to restoration and protection Develop a matrix of incentive methods and options for use by state agencies, local governments, and wetland restoration practitioners.**
Establish partnerships to increase funding for restoration, acquisition, and protection of priority areas	**Restoration & Protection 2.3**	**Ecology WSCC WDFW WDNR State Parks**	**Ongoing**	**Ecology will continue to coordinate with partners to obtain funding through the USFWS National Coastal Wetlands Conservation (NCWC) grant program for acquisition and restoration projects. Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Grants[61] (RCO) have numerous grant categories to fund protection and restoration of wetland/riparian habitats.**
Track restoration and protection efforts throughout the state & Monitor restoration and protection sites	**Restoration & Protection 3.1.1 & 3.1.2**	**RCO Ecology WDFW State Parks**	**Ongoing**	**Investigate interagency coordination on existing RCO database for tracking restoration/protection sites.**

[61] https://rco.wa.gov/

Core element – Monitoring and assessment

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional Details
Document the wetlands monitoring strategy	**Monitoring & Assessment Goal 1 1.3**	**M & A workgroup**	**2024-2025**	**A daft coordinated wetland monitoring and assessment strategy was included as Appendix D in the 2015 WPP. The Interagency Monitoring and Assessment Workgroup will update and finalize the strategy.**
Investigate developing a data management approach for coordinated data standards, storage, management, and dissemination of monitoring and assessment data	**Monitoring & Assessment 1.4**	**Ecology; -participating partners**	**2024-2029**	**Through discussions with the Monitoring and Assessment Work Group, share data and cross-train between state agencies and programs.** **Create a strong quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) approach for the data management system.** **Create or integrate with existing web-based data management platforms (e.g., a map viewer like the Coastal Atlas for spatial data) so that data are easily accessible by users.**
Implement phased wetland mapping efforts and development of Level 1 landscape assessments	**Monitoring & Assessment Goal 1 2.1**	**Ecology**	**Ongoing**	**In order to improve access to the phased wetland mapping efforts completed under this activity, Ecology will develop a web map to host wetland and ancillary data as tab on Washington's Coastal**

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional Details
				Atlas[62] and include story maps for specific projects. **Expand the Wetland Intrinsic Potential tool to provide mapping coverage of the entire state.**
Continue current and complete additional phases of Level 1 analyses of landscape-scale changes using NAIP-based land-cover change analyses.	Monitoring & Assessment Goal 1 2.1.4	WDFW; - Local gov'ts Ecology	Ongoing	Continue to support WDFW's High Resolution Land Use Change[63] analysis work and Ecology/NOAA's Modeled Wetland Inventory.
Apply Level 1 landscape-scale Ecology Integrity Assessments	**Monitoring & Assessment Goal 1 2.2.3**	**DNR-NHP**	**2024-25**	**DNR-NHP will update its Level 1 EIA model. DNR will also partner with NatureServe on an EPA-Headquarters WPDG proposal to develop a national Level 1 EIA tool, using WA model for local calibration/validation.**
Participate in EPA's National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA)	Monitoring & Assessment Goal 1 2.3.1	Ecology; - UW Burke Herbarium WDNR	Ongoing (next NWCA is scheduled for 2026)	Ecology and DNR-NHP participating. Burke Herbarium will be serving as plant lab. Ecology and NHP staff will assess wetlands sampled for NWCA using the methods of the WA Wetland Rating System and Level 2 EIA. Results

[62] **https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/coastalatlasmap**
[63] https://hrcd-wdfw.hub.arcgis.com/

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional Details
				will be compared with results from NWCA and used to understand how WA wetland ratings, EIA, and NWCA wetland assessments perform in relation to each other.
Evaluate the success of wetland mitigation.	**2015 WPP Appendix D: Wetland Monitoring Objectives** **Monitoring and Assessment Goal 1, Objective 2, Action 3** **(also Regulatory Objective 4.1)**	**Ecology;-WSDOT, WDFW**	**2027-29**	**Evaluate mitigation sites using EPA's three-tier approach to evaluate efficacy and success of mitigation program and ecological success of mitigation sites.** **Address these monitoring questions:** **• Do mitigation sites replace area and level of function?** **• Do mitigation sites continue to replace area and level of function after compliance monitoring is complete?** **• How do different types of wetland mitigation approaches compare regarding effectiveness?**
Develop invasive species assessment tools.	**Monitoring & Assessment Objective 2 and M&A Strategy objective to understand effects of invasive species**	**WNHP**	**2025**	**WNHP to develop an "Invasive Species Ranking Tool" One of the outputs will be a standardized list of nonnative species with individual 'invasiveness' rankings. This will provide a standardized list of invasive plant species that can be referenced.**

Core element – Outreach and education

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective. Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
Produce a field guide to DNR-NHP's wetland and riparian classification	Outreach & Education Objectives 1 & 2 and Idea List	WDNR- NHP; -WDFW -WSCC	2025	WDNR-NHP has drafted wetland and riparian ecosystem and vegetation type guides.[64] Contact WNHP ecologists for current drafts of the following: • Guide to Wetland and Riparian Types of Washington State • Field Guide to Wetland and Riparian Plant Associations of Washington State WDNR-NHP is planning to finalize the guides during this WPP implementation period.
Continue to work with the Coastal Training Program (CTP) to provide wetland-specific training as identified in the CTP strategic plan.	Outreach & Education Idea List	Ecology; Coastal Training Program -WDFW -WNHP -Washington Sea Grant -Local governments -PSP	Ongoing	Ecology's Wetland staff will continue to participate on the CTP Advisory Group and coordinate with CTP to offer training classes to professionals working in wetland-related disciplines. The CTP will continue to adapt training methods and strategies to respond to the shift to mostly virtual training (in response to COVID 19). Ecology will work with the CTP to provide a new training on the use of the 2021 Interagency Wetland Mitigation Guidance.

[64] https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHPwetlands

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective. Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
				In addition to this new class, we foresee offering the following classes: Wetland ratings trainings, Using the Credit-Debit Method, Selecting Mitigation Sites using a Watershed Approach, Woody plant ID, Ordinary High Water Mark (associated wetlands), Wetland classification, EIA, permitting, and field indicators for hydric soils.

Core element – Sustainable financing

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead - supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
Add capacity to help identify and seek out funding and partnership opportunities.	Sustainable Financing 1.1.1	Ecology; WPP Interagency Work Group	Ongoing	

Activities involving multiple core elements

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
Support and promote environmental justice in wetland-related agency actions	All	Ecology Dept. of Agriculture Commerce Health WDNR WSDOT PSP	Ongoing	Develop policies and programs in compliance with the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act (Chapter 70A.02 RCW – Environmental Justice). Incorporate environmental justice review and considerations into wetland program development.
Support Washington's Voluntary Stewardship Program	Regulatory 1.6 Restoration & Protection 1.3 Monitoring & Assessment 1.2	Ecology WDFW WSCC Dept. of Agriculture	2023-2028	Agencies will participate on the technical panel, and provide technical assistance on wetland assessment, management, and protection to County Work Groups enrolled in VSP.
Develop and implement web-based wetland rating tool	Regulatory 1.6.4 Monitoring & Assessment (Goal 1) 2.2 Outreach & Education 3.6	Ecology; -WSDOT	2023-2024	Ecology is developing a web-based tool to assist applicants with completing the Washington State Wetland Rating System forms. Training on the tool will be incorporated into existing classes on the wetland rating systems.

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
Continue to improve wetland mapping and classify wetlands to characterize wetland functions (Level 1 assessments)	**Regulatory 2.2.1** **Restoration & Protection 2.1** **Monitoring & Assessment 2.1.1 through 2.1.5** **Outreach and Education**	**Ecology; participating partners**	**2023-2029**	**Expand mapping resources to support wetland management across Washington State using the Wetland Intrinsic Potential tool.** **Develop guidance and quality assurance support for digitizing wetland mapping data.**
Identify high priority wetlands for protection as it relates to current DNR efforts and future wetland mapping and classification.	Regulatory 2.2.3 Restoration & Protection 2.1.1 through 2.1.3 Monitoring & Assessment 2.1.4 and 2.1.5	WDNR; -Ecology	Ongoing	
Increase capacity of non-Natural Heritage Program scientists to identify Wetlands of High Conservation Value by providing training to agency staff, consultants,	Monitoring & Assessment 1.4.1 Outreach & Education	WDNR-NHP, Ecology-Coastal Training Program	Ongoing	Continue to offer classification training, such as Cowardin, EIA, WHCV, etc. as demand and resources allow.

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective.Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
and others in using the WDNR-NHP's classification and wetland condition assessment methods.				
Develop and Implement QA approaches for WPP activities requiring them.	**Any activity that requires a QA plan**	**As identified for specific activities.**	**As needed**	**Agencies will develop and implement Quality Assurance approaches for WPP activities as projects require them. These include the development of Quality Assurance Project Plans for projects that generate new environmental data, analyze existing environmental data, or model environmental conditions.**

WPP plan review

Activity	WPP Reference Core Element Objective. Action.Activity	Lead; co-lead -supporters	Timeframe	Additional details
Annually review progress of activity implementation with the WPP Interagency Work Group	Periodic Plan Review on page 4	Ecology; WPP Interagency Work Group	Ongoing	Ecology coordinates with the State Interagency Work Group to scope the update for this plan. Continue the Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Workgroup meetings on a monthly to semi-monthly basis as needed.
Hold mid-plan review meeting with the EPA.	Program Assessment Actions 1.6.1	Ecology; WPP Interagency Work Group	2026	Mid-plan review with EPA to be conducted in 2026.
Update/renew the plan and submit to EPA for re-approval.	Program Assessment Actions 1.6.2	Ecology; WPP Interagency Work Group	2028	Convene the WPP Interagency Work Group to update the WPP for the planning cycle 2029-2035.