Priority Habitats & Species Program

Fish & Wildlife Commission Meeting

December 14th, 2018 | Olympia, WA

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Why care about PHS?

- **ID** and **protect** critical areas ***before*** planning decisions are made
- **Avoid** future development pressures on critical areas
- **Avoid** public safety conflicts
- **Avoid** future species listings and costs

Priority Habitats & Species (PHS)

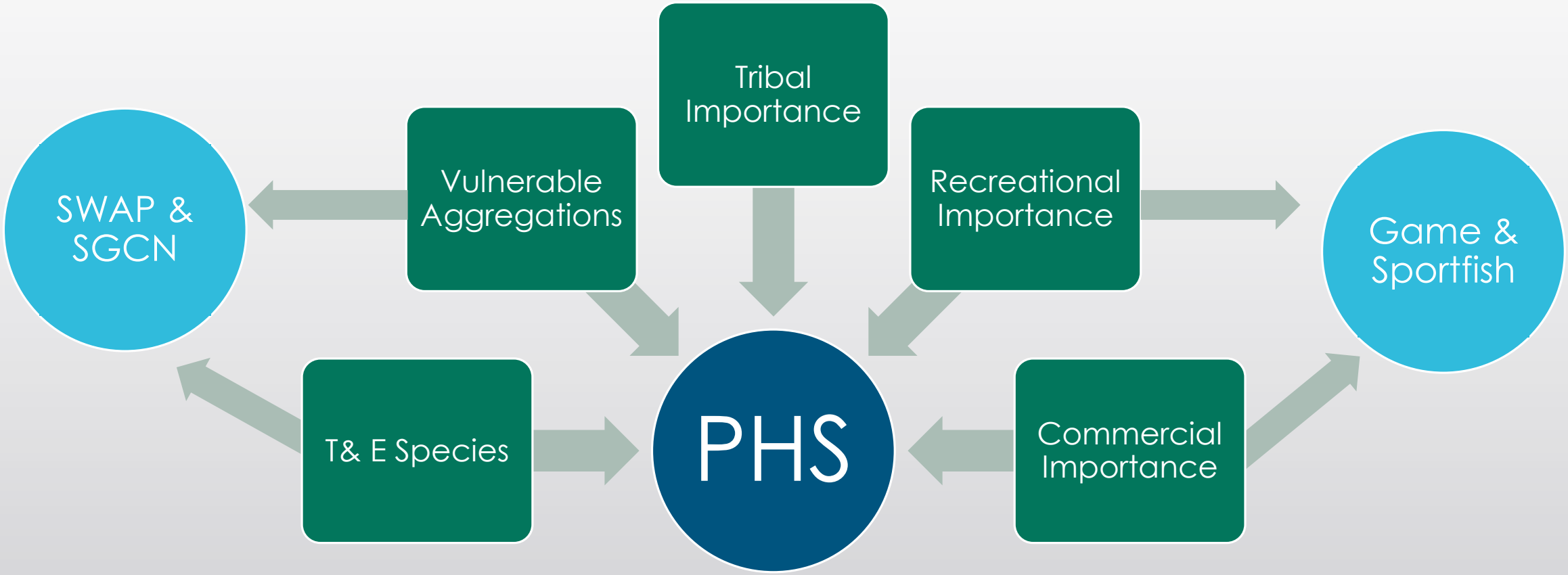
Helping Local Governments Protect Fish and Wildlife Since 1990

- **How** WDFW informs land use decision making
- Court-recognized source for **Best Available Science**
- Land Use Decisions:
  - Designating **Critical Habitat**
  - Designating **Fish & Wildlife Conservation Areas**
  - **Planning/permitting** for development
  - Informing **mitigation**, **acquisition**, **management**

…But what *IS* PHS?

- **<u>Principle means</u>** to provide important fish, wildlife, & habitat info for land use planning to:
  - Local governments
  - State agencies
  - Federal agencies
  - Private landowners
  - Tribal biologists
- Primary means to transfer fish and wildlife information from exerts to those that affect land use changes.

PHS is One DFW

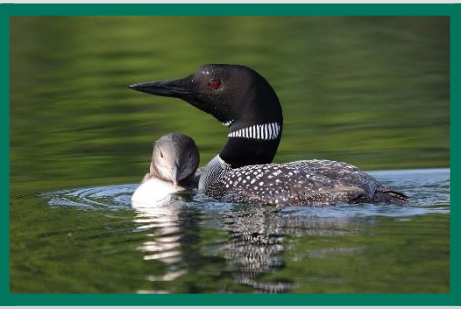


What PHS *is* and *is not*

PHS IS---	PHS IS NOT…
Suite of info and tools	Just a list, management recommendations, or a map
Guidelines and advice	Regulations
Key species & habitats **vulnerable** via **land use change**	An exhaustive list of species & habitats
General tool that requires skillful application	A cookbook providing a ready answers for all cases

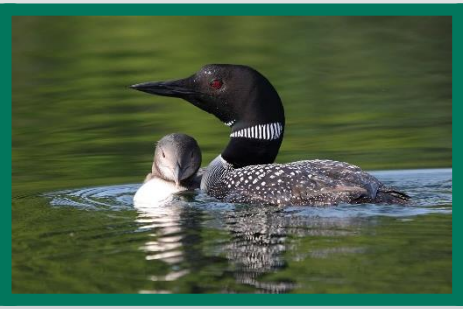
PHS Suite of Tools and Information

- PHS **Lists** – Criteria based
- PHS **Maps** – Known locations; High Resolution Change Detection
- PHS **Management Recommendations** – Syntheses of science-based land management considerations



PHS Suite of Tools and Information

- PHS **Technical Assistance**
  - Site- and situation-specific advice from Habitat Biologists
  - Regionally and Statewide
- PHS **Monitoring and Adaptive Management**



Current *In Progress* Products

- High Resolution Change Detection Maps

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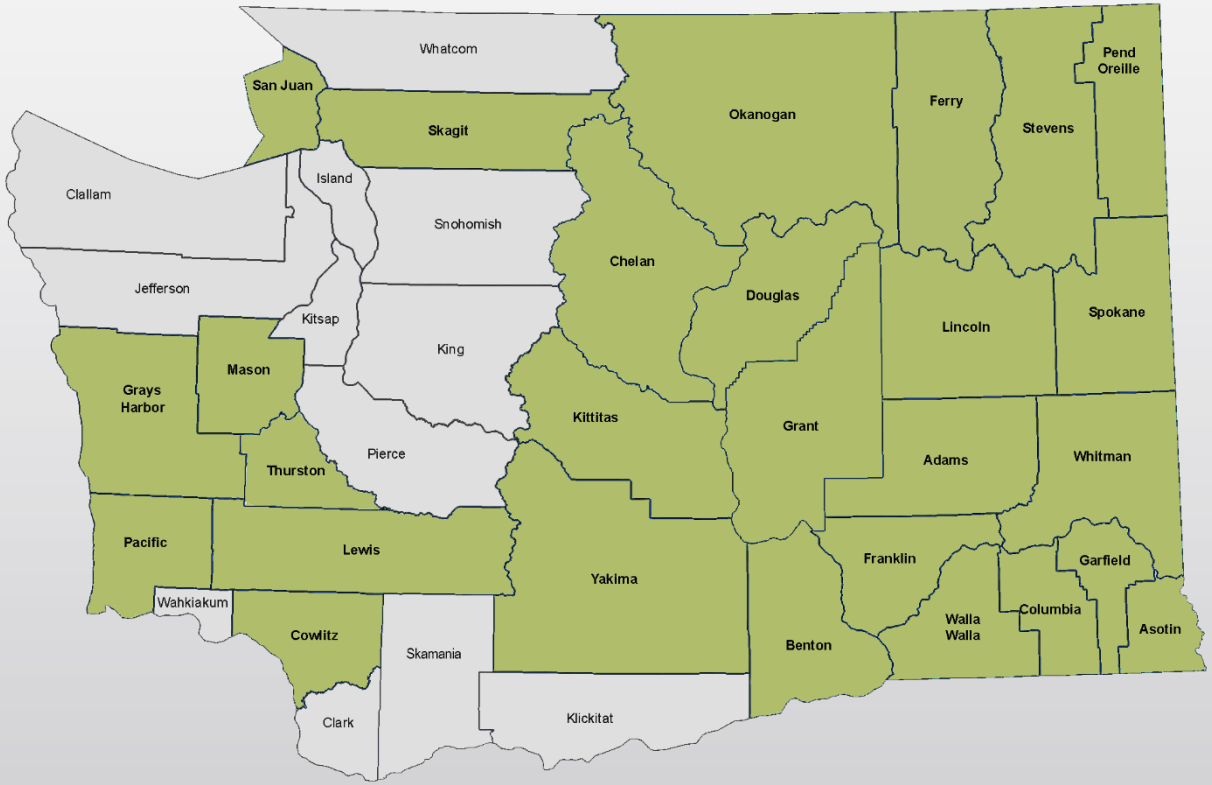
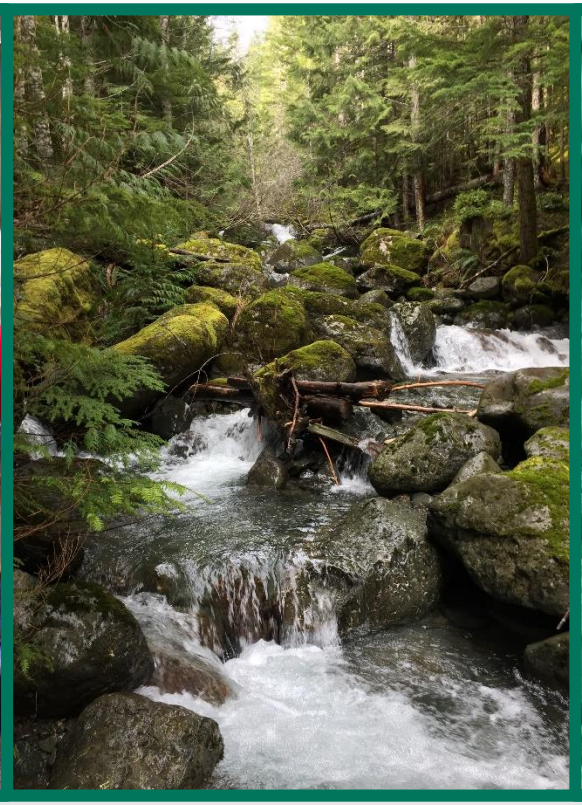
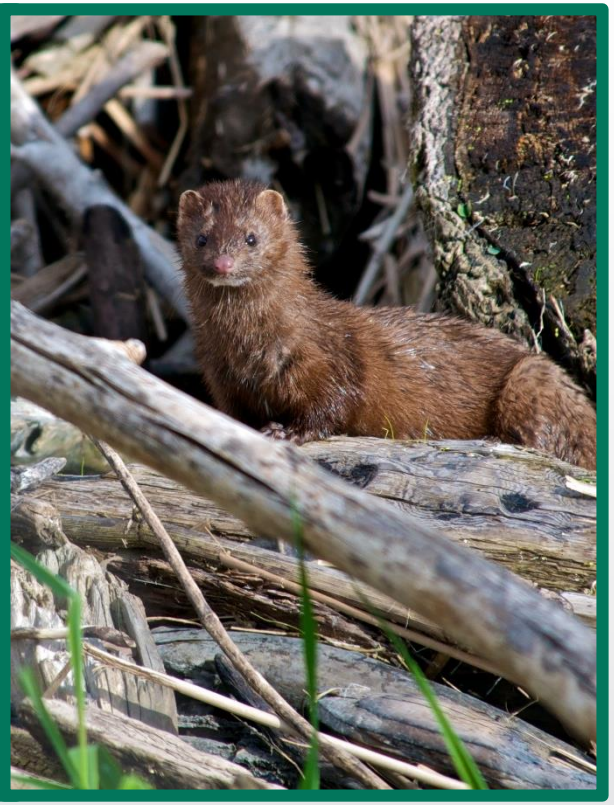
- High Resolution Change Detection Maps
- Voluntary Stewardship Program



Current *In Progress* Products

- High Resolution Change Detection Maps
- Voluntary Stewardship Program
- Riparian Ecosystems Science Synthesis (Vol. 1) and Management Guidelines (Vol. 2)

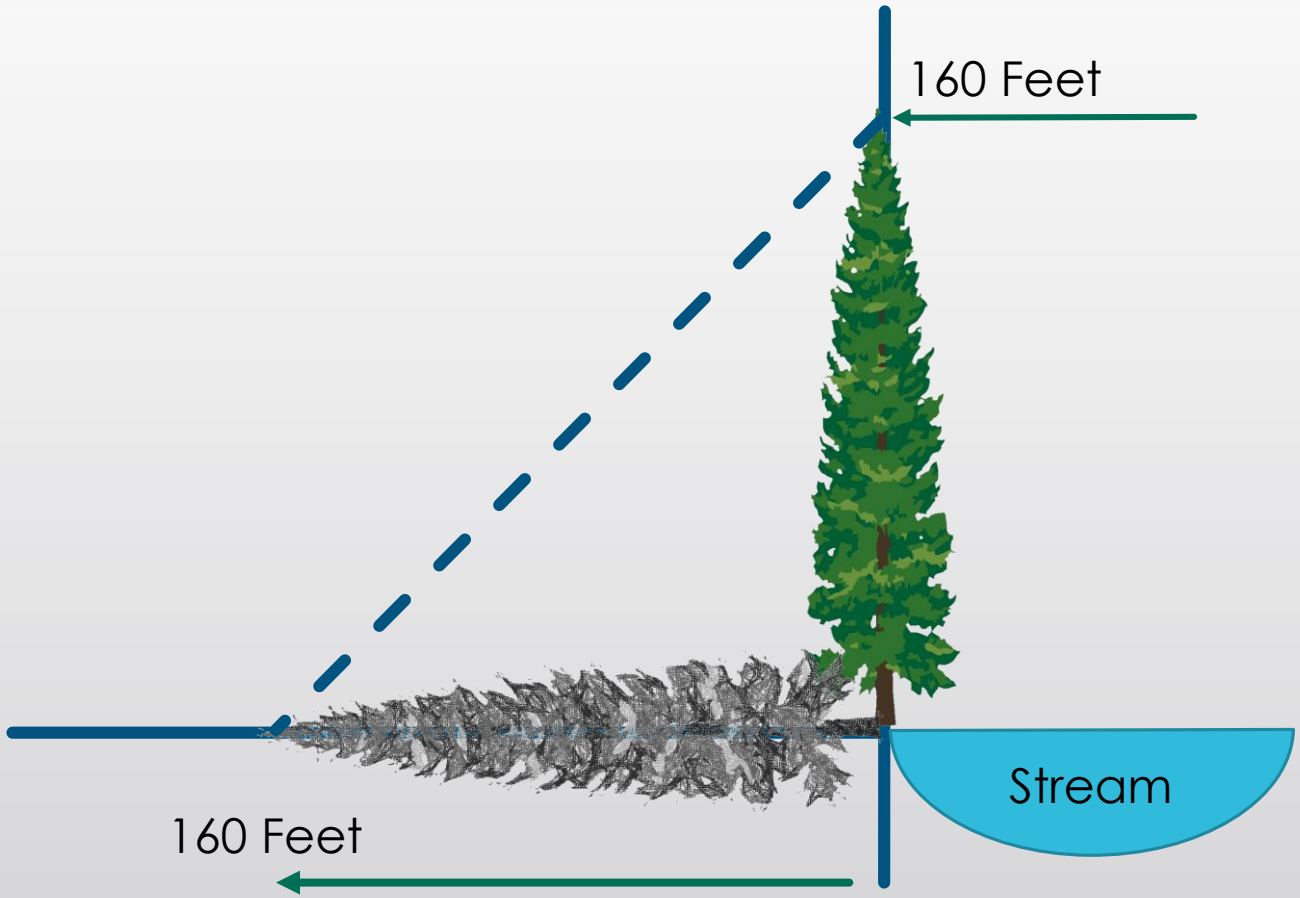
Priority Habitats and Species: Riparian

Natural riparian corridors are the most diverse, dynamic, and complex biophysical habitats on the terrestrial portion of the earth. (Naiman et. al 1993)

Riparian Ecosystems Document

- **Volume 1:** Science Synthesis and Management Implications
- **Volume 2:** Management Recommendations
  - Informed by Vol. 1 to develop specific recommendations
  - WDFW's best professional judgement
  - Advisory in nature
  - Primary audience: local governments by providing recommendations for protection and restoration

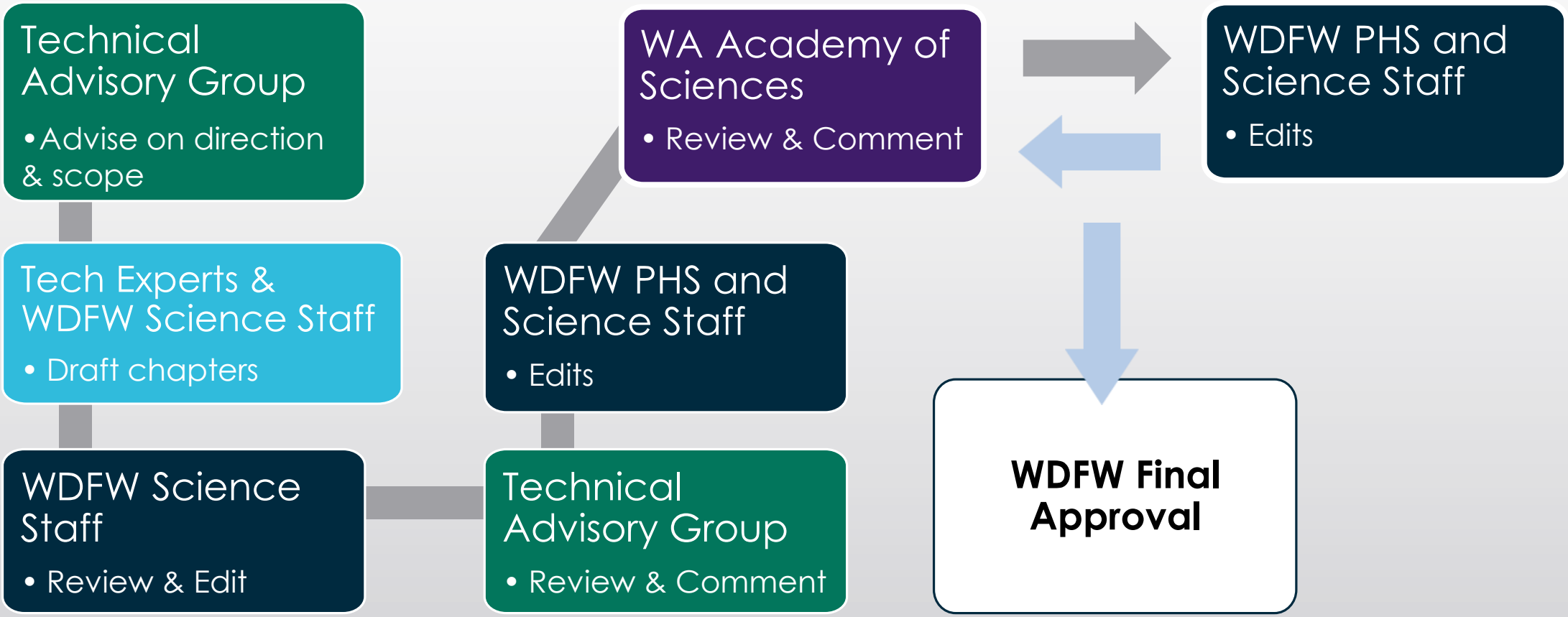
What is Site-Potential Tree Height?



Volume 1: Layout

- **Volume 1:** Science Synthesis and Management Implications
  - Chapters on individual riparian functions
  - Columbia Plateau
  - Watershed Management
  - Management Implications
  - Steps to determine Site-Potential Tree Height

Volume 1: Development Process



Volume 1: Management Implications

- Considered the most up-to-date and appropriate BAS for developing management recommendations & policies
- Forms the basis for Vol. 2

8 Key Findings

1. Riparian areas are critically important
2. Riparian ecosystems include floodplains, CMZs, wetlands

Volume 1: Management Implications

8 Key Findings (continued)

3. RMZ width estimated by SPTH (forested ecoregions) from streambank or CMZ
4. Historic range of natural variability = least risk condition for fish and wildlife
5. Watershed-scale processes critical for protection of riparian functions

Volume 1: Management Implications

8 Key Findings (continued)

6. Fish and wildlife populations depend upon complexity and dynamics of riparian areas
7. Population growth & climate change pose the greatest threat to riparian habitat .
8. Monitoring and adaptive management are critical to riparian habitat protection and conservation.

Volume 2: Layout

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: GMA, SMA and Protection of Critical Areas

Chapter 3: Regulatory Tools

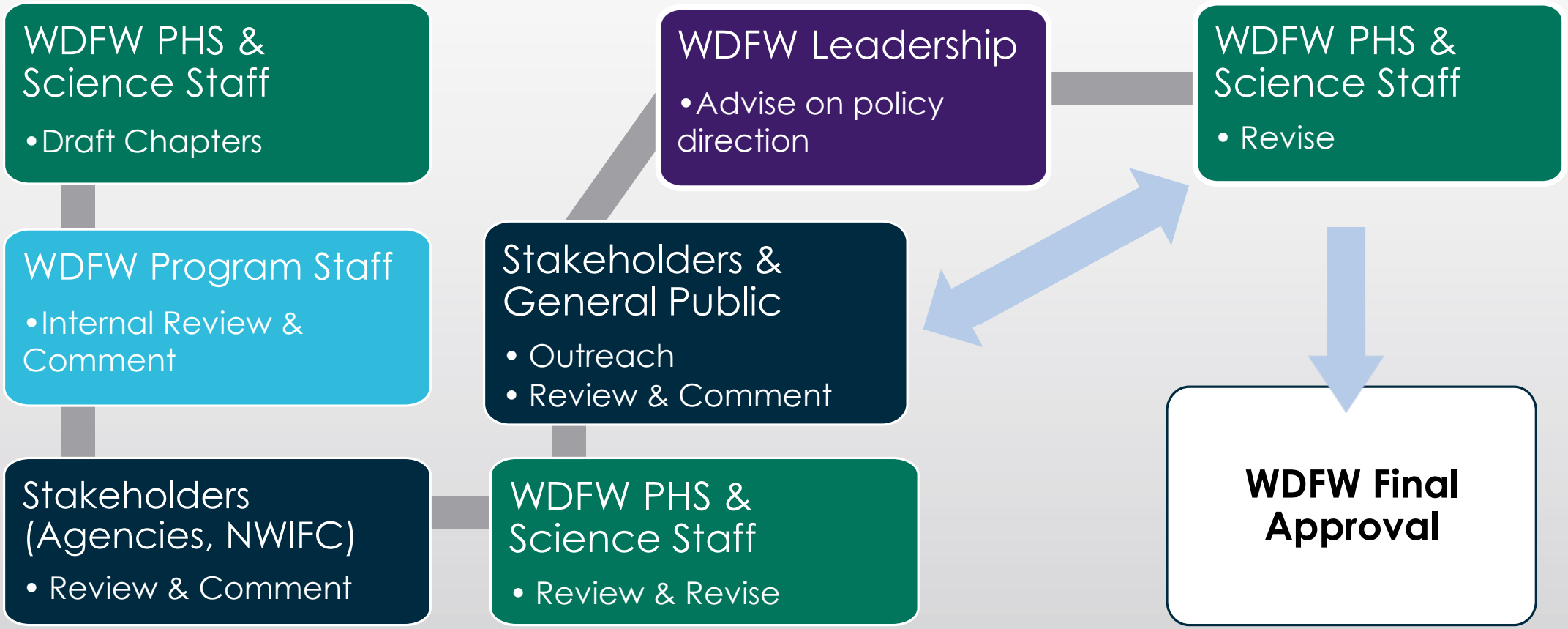
Chapter 4: Restoring Riparian Ecosystems and Protecting through Voluntary Stewardship

Chapter 5: Improving Protection through Monitoring & Adaptive Management

Appendices

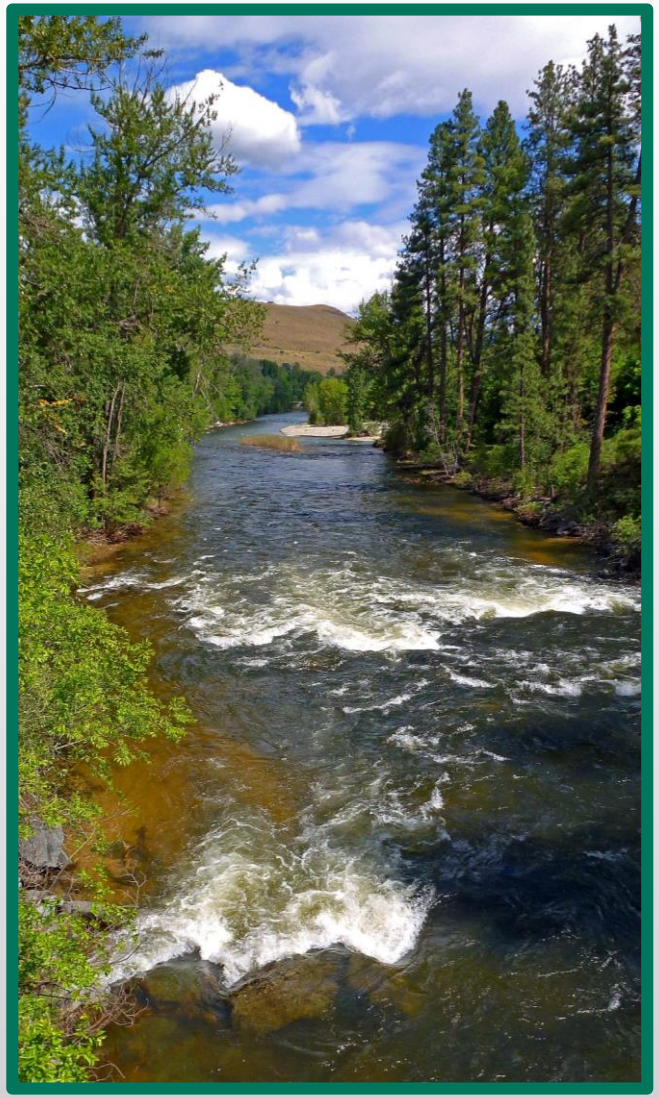
1. Determining Site-Potential Tree Height
2. SPTH Histograms by County
3. VSP Adaptive Management Matrix
4. Ecosystem Based Management Case Studies

Volume 2: Process



Revision Process – What's Changed?

- New Science, Familiar Concepts
- Riparian Management Zones as Critical Areas for Fish & Wildlife
- Inclusion of "no net loss of ecosystem functions and values"
- Integrate terrestrial components into revision
- Highlight the role of restoration
- Clarify strategy for non-forested regions
- *NEW* GIS tool to identify SPTH



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(Naiman et al. 1993)

… why the focus on riparian?

“To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.”

…why is PHS important? (again!)

Questions?

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