

Kittitas County Regional Shoreline Master Program Update

SMA Grant Agreement No. G1200054

January 2013

Grant Task 3.3: Develop Environment Designations

Background

Kittitas County adopted a Shoreline Management Program (SMP) in 1975. This SMP is also used by the City of Ellensburg, City of Cle Elum and Town of South Cle Elum and has not been updated since 1975. In the nearly forty years since the Kittitas County SMP was adopted, shoreline conditions and regulations have changed significantly and an update to the SMP is required by State law (RCW 90.58.080 – Shoreline Management Act). Kittitas County and the Cities/Town are participating in a multi-jurisdictional update process that will result in adoption of an independent SMP for each jurisdiction. As required by Task 3.3 of SMA Grant Agreement No. G1200054, this narrative rationale describes the reasons for the draft shoreline environment designations (SEDs) that are included in the January 2013 Initial Draft SMP.

Process

The proposed designations are based upon the coordinated efforts of the participating jurisdictions, Technical Advisory Committee, Citizen Advisory Committee, and the scientific, technical and cultural contributions of federal agencies, watershed planning units, conservation districts, public utility districts and other institutions.

Work began with a review of the existing Kittitas County SMP (from 1975) which includes four shoreline environment designations (Urban, Rural, Conservancy, and Natural) and a review of the shoreline environment designations as described in the Master Program Guidelines (WAC 173-26-211). Consultants prepared a summary table (*Exhibit 1*) of the six basic shoreline environment designations identified in the guidelines: High-Intensity, Shoreline Residential, Urban Conservancy, Rural Conservancy, Natural, and Aquatic. The purpose and designation criteria for each designation informed discussions and assignments of appropriate designations for the shorelines within Kittitas County. The potential use of unique, locally developed shoreline environment designations was also discussed with the Technical Advisory Committee in July 2012.

A draft Kittitas County Shoreline Inventory and Characterization Report (ICR) was issued in June 2012. This document provided physical and ecological features, built environment and land use information, and a shoreline function analysis for each of the shorelines identified in preliminary mapping exercises. The information contained in the ICR was compiled into a reach analysis table where the various shoreline characteristics could be viewed together.

A flowchart, based on the WAC designation criteria, was developed as a tool for determining the most appropriate designation for particular shorelines (*Exhibit 2*). Based on the shoreline characteristics identified in the ICR and the flowchart, shorelines were mapped and assigned shoreline environment designations.

The existing shoreline maps (from the 1975 SMP) were also reviewed to compare the location of the existing designations with the new assigned shoreline environment designations. As the 1975 SMP map is black and white, difficult to read, and prepared before current mapping methodologies, the 1975 designations were interpreted and mapped in color by the County's GIS staff on separate maps. The color representations of the existing 1975 SMP maps are attached to this memo as *Exhibit 3*.

Open houses and community meetings were also held throughout the update process to inform the public of regulatory requirements and to encourage participation in the update process. Materials regarding the purpose and process for development of shoreline environment designations and draft proposed shoreline environment designations maps were available at these meetings in July, September, and November 2012.

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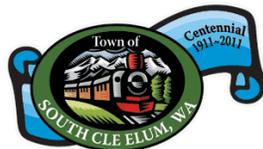


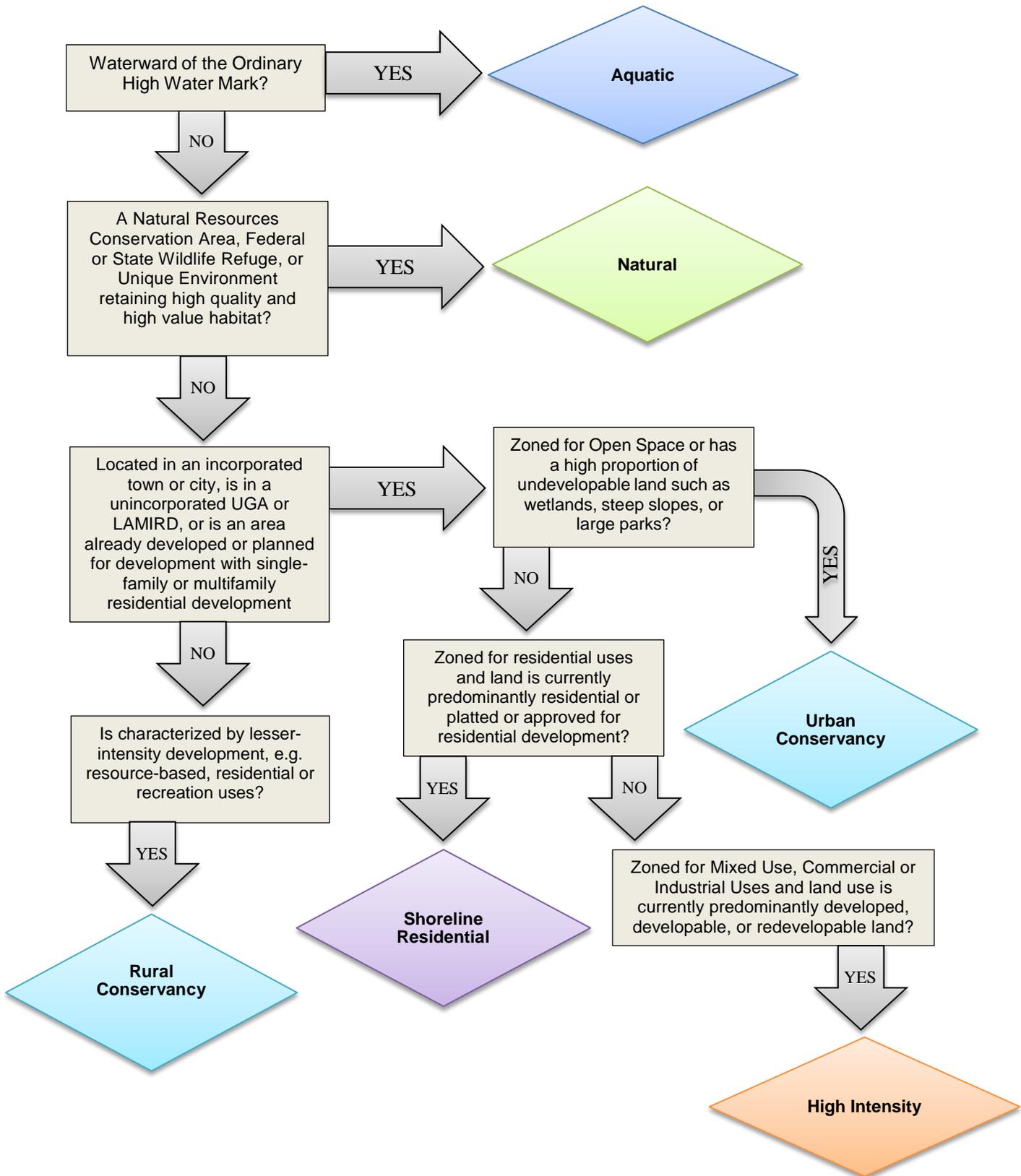
Exhibit 1

Shoreline Environment Purpose and Designation Criteria from WAC 173-26-211

Environment Designation	Purpose	Criteria for Assigning Designations
Aquatic	The purpose of the "aquatic" environment is to protect, restore, and manage the unique characteristics and resources of the areas waterward of the ordinary high-water mark.	Assign an "aquatic" environment designation to lands waterward of the ordinary high-water mark.
Natural	The purpose of the "natural" environment is to protect those shoreline areas that are relatively free of human influence or that include intact or minimally degraded shoreline functions intolerant of human use. These systems require that only very low-intensity uses be allowed in order to maintain the ecological functions and ecosystem-wide processes. Consistent with the policies of the designation, local government should include planning for restoration of degraded shorelines within this environment.	<p>A "natural" environment designation should be assigned to shoreline areas if any of the following characteristics apply: (A) The shoreline is ecologically intact and therefore, currently performing an important, irreplaceable function or ecosystem-wide process that would be damaged by human activity; (B) The shoreline is considered to represent ecosystems and geologic types that are of particular scientific and educational interest; or (C) The shoreline is unable to support new development or uses without significant adverse impacts to ecological functions or risk to human safety.</p> <p>Such shoreline areas include largely undisturbed portions of shoreline areas such as wetlands, estuaries, unstable bluffs, coastal dunes, spits, and ecologically intact shoreline habitats. Shorelines inside or outside urban growth areas may be designated as "natural."</p>
Rural Conservancy	The purpose of the "rural conservancy" environment is to protect ecological functions, conserve existing natural resources and valuable historic and cultural areas in order to provide for sustained resource use, achieve natural flood plain processes, and provide recreational opportunities. Examples of uses that are appropriate in a "rural conservancy" environment include low-impact outdoor recreation uses, timber harvesting on a sustained-yield basis, agricultural uses, aquaculture, low-intensity residential development and other natural resource-based low-intensity uses.	Assign a "rural conservancy" environment designation to shoreline areas outside incorporated municipalities and outside urban growth areas, as defined by RCW 36.70A.110, if any of the following characteristics apply: (A) The shoreline is currently supporting lesser-intensity resource-based uses, such as agriculture, forestry, or recreational uses, or is designated agricultural or forest lands pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170; (B) The shoreline is currently accommodating residential uses outside urban growth areas and incorporated cities or towns; (C) The shoreline is supporting human uses but subject to environmental limitations, such as properties that include or are adjacent to steep banks, feeder bluffs, or flood plains or other flood-prone areas; (D) The shoreline is of high recreational value or with unique historic or cultural resources; or (E) The shoreline has low-intensity water-dependent uses.
Urban Conservancy	The purpose of the "urban conservancy" environment is to protect and restore ecological functions of open space, flood plain, and other sensitive lands where they exist in urban and developed settings, while allowing a variety of compatible uses.	Assign an "urban conservancy" environment designation to shoreline areas appropriate and planned for development that is compatible with maintaining or restoring of the ecological functions of the area, that are not generally suitable for water-dependent uses and that lie in incorporated municipalities, urban growth areas, or commercial or industrial "rural areas of more intense development" if any of the following characteristics apply: (A) They are suitable for water-related or water-enjoyment uses; (B) They are open space, flood plain or other sensitive areas that should not be more intensively developed; (C) They have potential for ecological restoration; (D) They retain important ecological functions, even though partially developed; or (E) They have the potential for development that is compatible with ecological restoration.
Shoreline Residential	The purpose of the "shoreline residential" environment is to accommodate residential development and appurtenant structures that are consistent with this chapter. An additional purpose is to provide appropriate public access and recreational uses.	Assign a "shoreline residential" environment designation to shoreline areas inside urban growth areas, as defined in RCW 36.70A.110, incorporated municipalities, "rural areas of more intense development," or "master planned resorts," as described in RCW 36.70A.360, if they are predominantly single-family or multifamily residential development, or are planned and platted for residential development.
High-Intensity	The purpose of the "high-intensity" environment is to provide for high-intensity water-oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses while protecting existing ecological functions and restoring ecological functions in areas that have been previously degraded.	Assign a "high-intensity" environment designation to shoreline areas within incorporated municipalities, urban growth areas, and industrial or commercial "rural areas of more intense development," as described by RCW 36.70A.070, if they currently support high-intensity uses related to commerce, transportation or navigation; or are suitable and planned for high-intensity water-oriented uses.

Exhibit 2

Flowchart Used to Assign Shoreline Environment Designations



**Exhibit 3
Shoreline Environment Designations Maps (1975 SMP)**

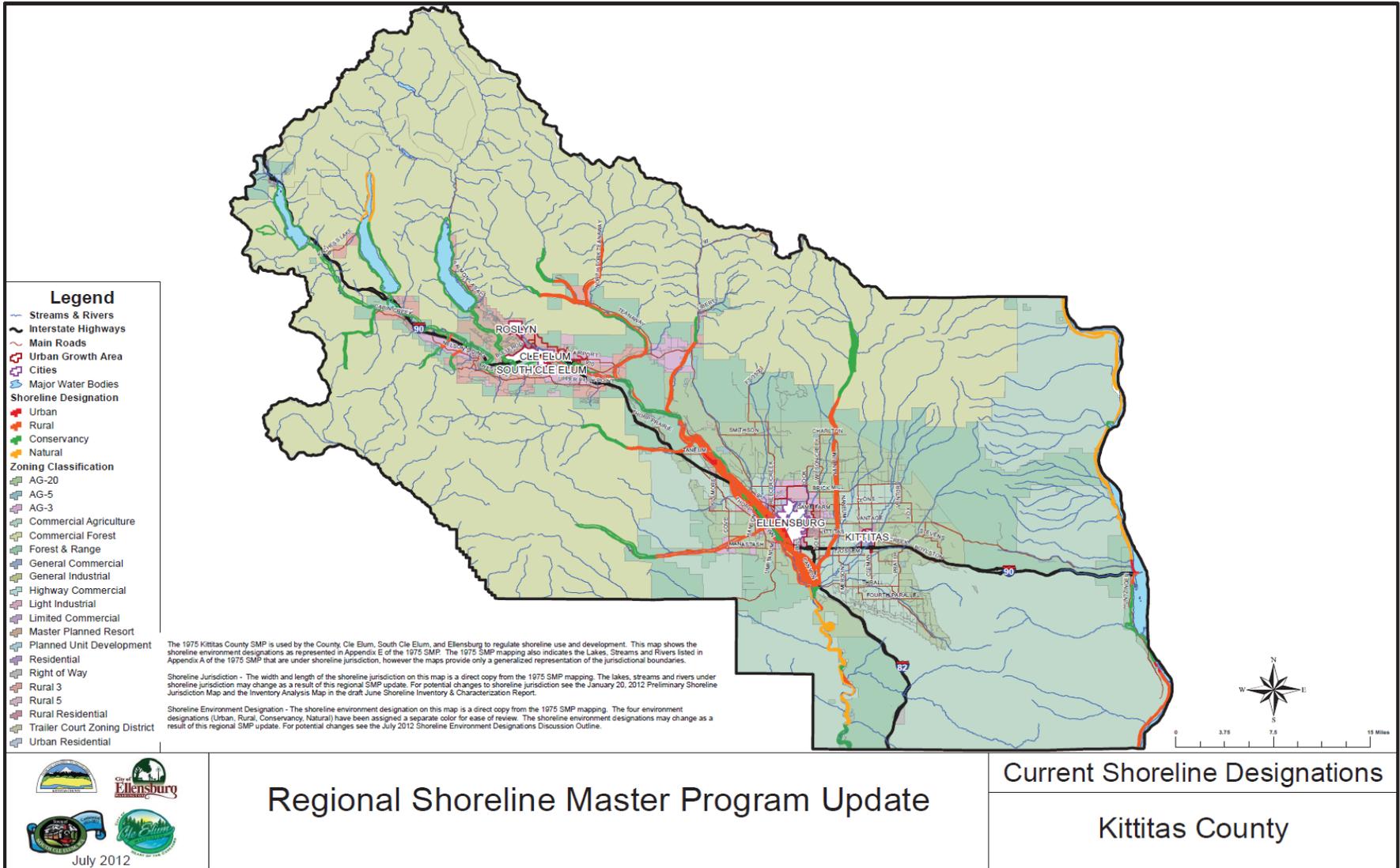
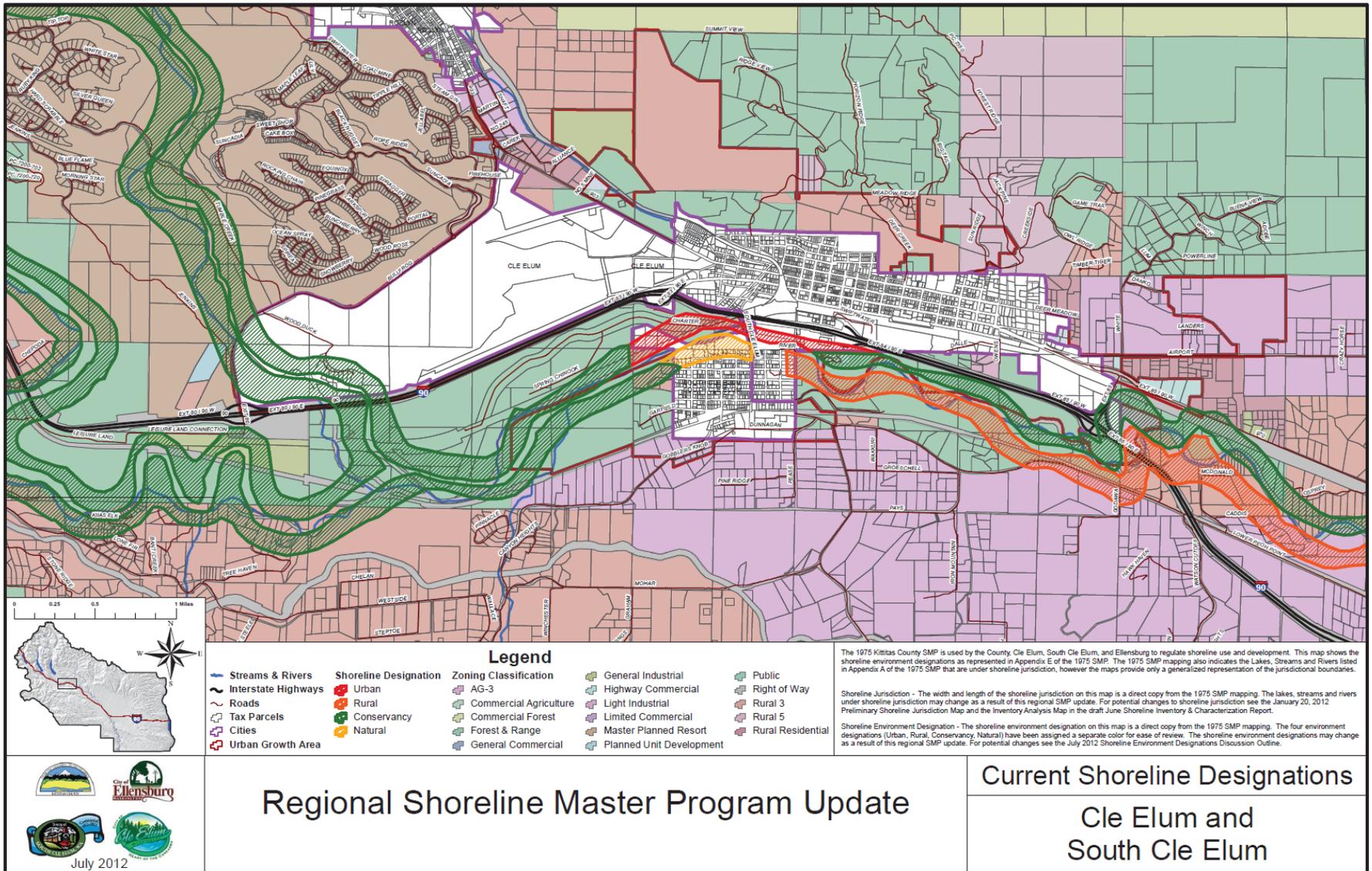


Exhibit 3 - continued
 Shoreline Environment Designations Maps (1975 SMP)



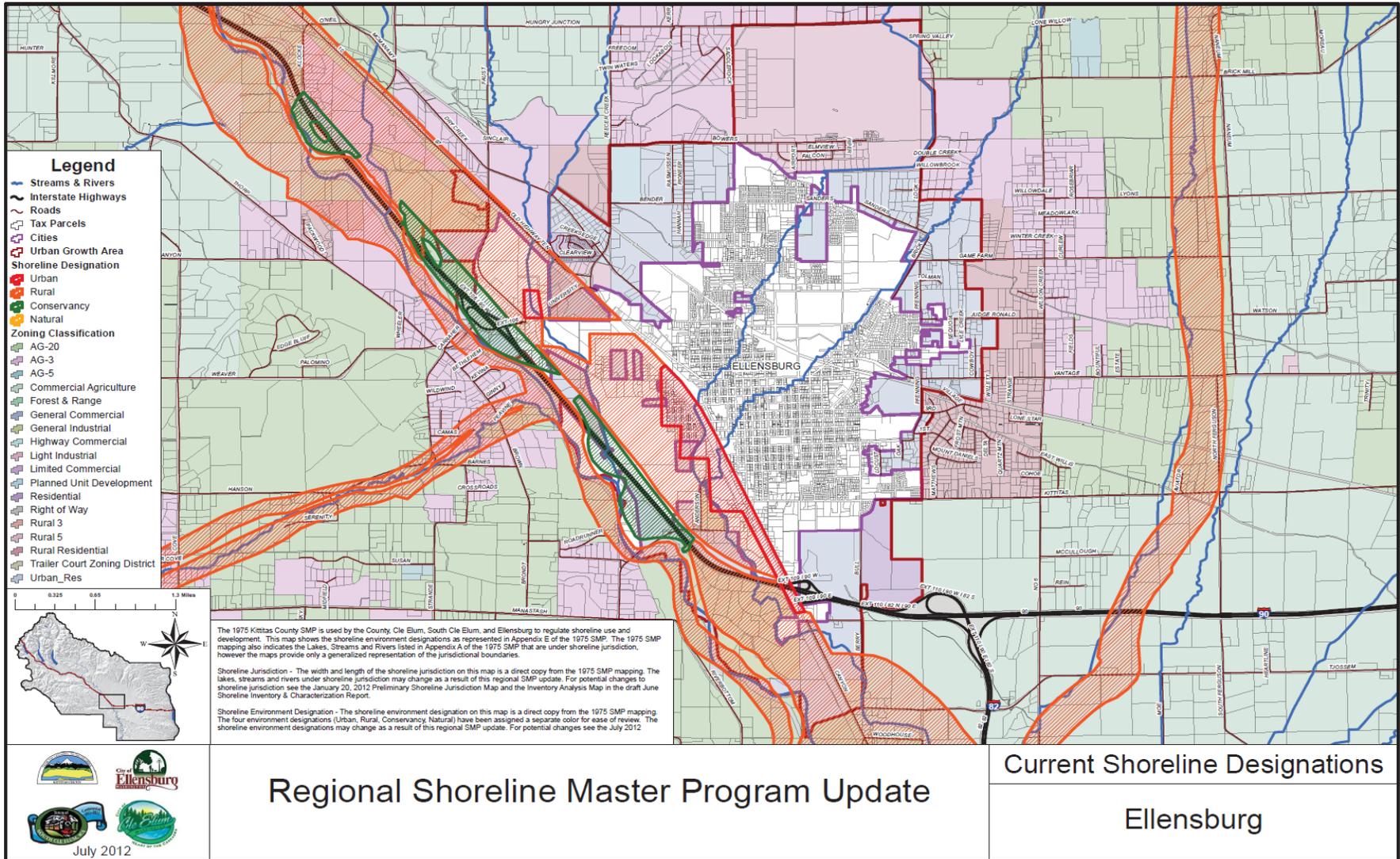
Regional Shoreline Master Program Update

Current Shoreline Designations

Cle Elum and
 South Cle Elum



Exhibit 3 - continued
 Shoreline Environment Designations Maps (1975 SMP)



Initial Draft Shoreline Environment Designations

Designations – Purpose and Criteria

As a result of reviewing the ICR and considering Advisory Committee comments, County and Cities/Town staff feedback, public comments and Ecology's recommendations, the January 2013 Initial Draft SMP includes the six shoreline environment designations identified in the Master Program Guidelines: High-Intensity, Shoreline Residential, Urban Conservancy, Rural Conservancy, Natural, and Aquatic. A photograph of a local shoreline representing each of the environment designations, excluding Aquatic, is included in *Exhibit 4*. The purpose and criteria for each proposed designation is included in Chapter 3 of the January 2013 Initial Draft SMP.

During initial phases in the process, a separate Channel Migration Zone (CMZ) environment designation was discussed. However, the CMZ designation was abandoned because it was determined that the specific development regulations for CMZs to be included in Chapter 4 of the updated SMP (and proposed for upcoming revisions to the County's Critical Areas Ordinance) could adequately regulate development activities in channel migration zones regardless of their assigned shoreline environment designation.

Designations – Mapping

The proposed shoreline environment designations (SEDs) maps are included in Appendix A of the January 2013 Initial Draft SMP. Common boundary descriptions are included in Appendix B to accurately define and distinguish the environments on the ground. In addition, the Citizens Advisory Committee and staff from the County and Cities/Town are recommending the minimum shoreline jurisdiction; however, both the minimum jurisdiction and an optional maximum jurisdiction (entire 100-year floodplain plus land necessary for buffers for critical areas within shorelines) are reflected on the SEDs maps in Appendix A.

In addition, the flowchart tool (*Exhibit 2*) limited assignment of the new "Shoreline Residential" designation to incorporated areas or areas inside UGAs. However, the process of reviewing specific shorelines in the rural area revealed that the intensity of existing residential development on some rural shorelines made "Shoreline Residential" the most appropriate designation. In those cases, the characteristics of the shoreline, rather than the location of the property relative to city or UGA boundaries, was given the most weight in determining the appropriate shoreline environment designation.

Last, based on USGS data Cherry Creek and Coleman Creek were shown within shoreline jurisdiction on the preliminary jurisdiction maps submitted to Ecology in January 2012 with Grant Task 1.1. However, local stakeholders with knowledge of the area and the Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) noted that a portion of Cherry Creek should be identified as Cooke Creek and that neither Cooke Creek nor Coleman Creek are designated in the 1975 SMP. KCCD has presented information (including flow data) that indicates that the creeks do not meet the 20 cfs mean annual flow criterion to be regulated under the Shoreline Management Act. A discrepancy remains between the USGS data on the creeks and the information presented by local stakeholders and the KCCD. Cooke Creek and Coleman Creek remain on the initial draft designation maps (see Map 25 and related note) while the County reviews the discrepancy between the USGS data and information presented from KCCD.

Exhibit 4
Representative Photos of Shoreline Environment Designations

A. Natural



Lake Kachess (unincorporated Kittitas County)

B. Rural Conservancy



Manastash Creek (unincorporated Kittitas County)

Exhibit 4 continued
Representative Photos of Shoreline Environment Designations

C. High-Intensity



Shoreline area in Yakima River floodplain zoned "Industrial" (Cle Elum city limits)

D. Urban Conservancy



Photo courtesy of WA Wildlife and Recreation Coalition

Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park (Ellensburg)

Exhibit 4 continued
Representative Photos of Shoreline Environment Designations

E. Shoreline Residential



Photo Credit: Google Earth

Residential development along the Columbia River (Vantage LAMIRD)

F. Aquatic - The Aquatic designation was applied to lands waterward of the ordinary high water mark.