

## Forestland Element - Supplementary Information

### Additional Background

In Washington state, Forest Practices Rules are developed under the direction of the [Forest Practices Board](#), an independent state agency established by the Forest Practices Act ([Chapter 76.09 RCW](#)) and implemented by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The [Forest Practices Adaptive Management Program](#) (AMP) – which includes non-industrial landowners, public agencies, counties, the forest industry, environmental community and tribal governments – develops science-based recommendations and technical information to help the Forest Practices Board determine if and when it is necessary or advisable to adjust the rules and guidance for the protection of aquatic resources to achieve the goals and objectives of the [Forests and Fish Report](#).

In 2012, DNR contributed technical information to a report produced by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center that summarized the current science and relevant rules related to forest practices and hydrology in the Chehalis Basin<sup>1</sup>. The report was authorized by the 2011 Washington State Legislature to help inform the community, decision makers and other interested stakeholders as they were making decisions relating to flood relief and protection in the basin. That report also recommended three projects to inform a long-term strategy for the Chehalis Basin – LiDAR collection, unstable slope evaluation, and an evaluation of road maintenance effectiveness – which have been advanced by the AMP and are scheduled to be completed by 2028<sup>2</sup>.

In 2016, DNR contributed technical information for a follow-up to the 2012 report (included as part of the 2017 Chehalis Basin Strategy Programmatic EIS) which outlined additional actions that have been taken by the Forest Practices Board to improve identification of potentially unstable slopes and further reduce the potential for influence of forest practices activities on landslides<sup>3</sup>.

Both DNR reports underscore that the landscape of working forests in the Chehalis Basin during the 2007 flooding event reflected a mix of old and new regulatory standards, meaning units harvested prior to 2001 would have been subject to less restrictive rules and analyses to assure an avoidance of potentially unstable slopes and protection of riparian habitat.

### Summary of Key Forest Practices Board Actions and Rule Updates Relevant to Forest Hydrology and Riparian Habitat Protection in the Chehalis Basin

- **1992** – New rules to address cumulative effects through watershed analyses (including a specific mass wasting analysis that analyzed the effects of forest practices on a watershed

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix G of the Chehalis Basin Flood Hazard Mitigation Alternatives Report – <https://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/chehalis-report-12-19-121.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See adaptive management documents at <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/AdaptiveManagementResearchDocs>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Appendix-E-Final-Chehalis-Forest-Practices-Landslides.pdf>

scale), and rules related to operations on potentially avoidance measures for any identified hazards and risks.

- **1999/2001** - Following the passage of the Forests & Fish Law ([ESHB 2091](#)) and consistent with the [Forests and Fish Report](#), the Forest Practices Board implemented new rules for water typing, riparian management zones, unstable slopes, roads and wetlands, watershed analysis SEPA guidance, adaptive management, enforcement, and use of chemicals.
- **2000** - [Forest Riparian Easement Program](#) established.
- **2006** - [Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan](#) is adopted. This statewide programmatic plan - a first of its kind in the nation due to its scope and collaborative process that involved state, federal, tribal and local governments, environmental interest, and small and large forest landowners - protects over 9 million acres of state and private forest land and 60,000 miles of streams.
- **2011** - In response to analyses of the effects of the December 2007 storm, the Forest Practices Board amended the [Watershed Analysis rules](#) and associated guidance to reinforce the existing process and timing for 5-year reviews of the mass wasting prescriptions developed by watershed analyses.
- **2013** - New guidelines for [Forest Practices Hydraulic Projects \(FPHP\)](#) are adopted to make consistent with [hydraulic code requirements](#) for culverts and bridges and fish passage.
- **2015** - The Forest Practices Board completed new rules and board manual guidance for identifying potentially unstable slopes and landforms<sup>4</sup>.
- **2015** - CMER Master Project Schedule developed (and updated annually<sup>5</sup>) to implement a long-term research plan, initially focused on the following priority areas:
  - Fish habitat modeling to explore enhancing how the regulatory break between fish- (Type F) and non-fish (Type N) waters is established;
  - Effectiveness of stream Type F and stream Type N riparian prescriptions;
  - Monitoring to evaluate status and trends for resource conditions across lands covered by the HCP;
  - Evaluation of landforms regulated as unstable slopes;
  - Effectiveness of best management prescriptions for road construction and maintenance to reduce surface erosion; and
  - Timber harvest effects on forested wetlands, remote mapping of wetlands, and effectiveness of wetland buffers.
- **2016** - As part of the 2001 Forest and Fish rules, the process for Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plans (RMAP) was created to provide landowners with a method to evaluate their forest roads, identify areas that do not meet Forest Practices Rules standards, and schedule needed upgrades. Landowners have completed the work under RMAPs and their considerable efforts in coordination with DNR represents major lasting

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/about/boards-and-councils/forest-practices-board/forest-practices-board-past-meetings#board2015>

<sup>5</sup> For more info see 2023 CMER Master Project Schedule – [https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/bc\\_fpb\\_mps\\_20230510.pdf](https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/bc_fpb_mps_20230510.pdf)

accomplishments on the ground for aquatic resources including water quality and fish and public safety.

- **2021-2023** - AMP staff and participants have completed action items on the [State Auditor Office \(SAO\) recommendations](#) to improve efficiency, accountability and transparency in the AMP decision-making process. All action items listed in the SAO recommendations are scheduled to be completed in 2024.
- **2023** - The Forest Practices Board approved a suite of recommendations to update the riparian management zone buffer rules for Type Np (non-fish-bearing perennial) streams to expand protections for aquatic resources, based on studies developed through the AMP.

## More Information

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Refer to the [Forest Practices AMP](#) website for more details on the AMP process, TFW Policy and CMER Committees, and CMER Master Project Schedule.

See Appendix G of the [Chehalis Basin Flood Hazard Mitigation Alternatives Report](#) and [Appendix E](#) of the 2017 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for more details about current and historic forest practices in the Chehalis Basin.