

WAC 365-195-920 Criteria for addressing inadequate scientific information. (1) Where there is an absence of valid scientific information or incomplete scientific information relating to a county's or city's critical areas, leading to uncertainty about which development and land uses could lead to harm of critical areas or uncertainty about the risk to critical area function of permitting development, counties and cities should use the following approach:

(a) A "precautionary or a no risk approach," in which development and land use activities are strictly limited until the uncertainty is sufficiently resolved; and

(b) As an interim approach, an effective adaptive management program that relies on scientific methods to evaluate how well regulatory and nonregulatory actions achieve their objectives. Management, policy, and regulatory actions are treated as experiments that are purposefully monitored and evaluated to determine whether they are effective and, if not, how they should be improved to increase their effectiveness. An adaptive management program is a formal and deliberate scientific approach to taking action and obtaining information in the face of uncertainty. To effectively implement an adaptive management program, counties and cities should be willing to:

(i) Address funding for the research component of the adaptive management program;

(ii) Change course based on the results and interpretation of new information that resolves uncertainties; and

(iii) Commit to the appropriate time frame and scale necessary to reliably evaluate regulatory and nonregulatory actions affecting critical areas protection and anadromous fisheries.

(2) Ongoing permit implementation monitoring and adaptive management.

(a) In addition to the use of formal scientific approaches to monitoring and adaptive management program as an interim approach as described above, the department recommends counties and cities develop and maintain ongoing monitoring and adaptive management procedures to ensure implementation of critical area regulations is efficient and effective. Counties and cities should consult department guidance documents for information.

(b) Steps in developing permit implementation monitoring and adaptive management programs include:

(i) Determining the reasons for monitoring;

(ii) Establishing key objectives and study questions;

(iii) Designing the monitoring program;

(iv) Determining the monitoring time frame; and

(v) Evaluating results and making recommendations.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 36.70A.050 and 36.70A.190. WSR 23-08-037, § 365-195-920, filed 3/29/23, effective 4/29/23. Statutory Authority: RCW 36.70A.190 (4)(b). WSR 00-16-064, § 365-195-920, filed 7/27/00, effective 8/27/00.]