

Geologic Planning in Washington

WHAT IS GEOLOGIC PLANNING?

Scientists at the Washington Geological Survey (WGS), part of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), are experts in Washington State geology. Our research touches on many aspects of geology such as geologic hazards, mineral resources, and climate change. These topics are relevant for society, and our work contributes to the safety and economic well-being of Washington’s residents. Geologic planning work involves understanding, sharing, and implementing scientific information with the community. The WGS Geologic Planning Liaison works with a wide range of people to more effectively connect science at WGS with other state agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribes.



- ▶ Delineating critical areas, including geologically hazardous areas, is required under the Growth Management Act (GMA) as described in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [36.70A](#) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Chapters [365-190 \(Minimum Guidelines\)](#), [365-195 \(Best Available Science\)](#), and [365-196 \(Procedural Criteria\)](#).
- ▶ Counties and cities must use the best-available science to periodically review and update their comprehensive plans, designate critical areas, and adopt regulations to protect critical areas.
- ▶ Planning for aggregate needs and use is required under RCW [36.70A.131](#) and WAC [365-190-070](#). Counties and cities must identify and designate aggregate (part of mineral resources) of long-term commercial significance. The GMA requires that counties and cities use information provided by DNR for their land-use decisions related to mineral resources and Mineral Resource Lands.

<p>How can WGS’s Geologic Planning work help with land-use planning?</p>	<p>Geologic hazards and mineral resource lands mapping assists land-use planners, emergency managers, public works staff, and those who live and work where geologic hazards and mineral resources are located. Local jurisdictions can make better informed decisions about their assets, community safety, and growth management planning using the best-available science.</p>
<p>What does WGS’s Geologic Planning do?</p>	<p>WGS identifies geologic hazards and aggregate mineral resources, provides data, maps, and technical assistance such as training and outreach, and creates other tools that county and city planners can use. The use of the information and the regulatory decisions are made by local governments.</p>
<p>What does WGS’s Geologic Planning NOT do?</p>	<p>WGS does not revise building codes, evaluate development permits, or regulate land-use planning.</p>

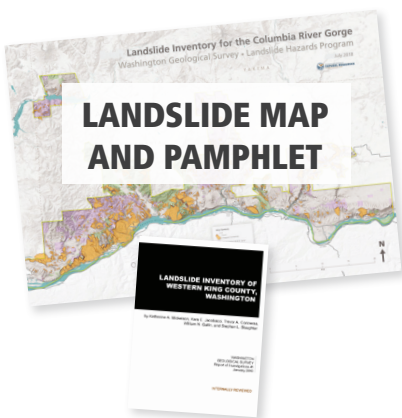
WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT GEOLOGIC HAZARDS?

In Washington State, the most significant geologic hazards are earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic events, and landslides. Other geologic hazards include subsidence above improperly reclaimed mines and exposure to hazardous minerals like radon. Climate change and additional human alteration of the environment exacerbate impacts to people, property, and infrastructure from natural hazards, increasing the need for hazard identification and efforts to minimize risk and mitigate impacts.



HOW WGS SHARES INFORMATION

With regards to geologic hazards, mineral resources, and climate change, WGS provides information and technical assistance. WGS publishes maps and data, including GIS data in a variety of formats. Our maps and data typically include a pamphlet of methods and findings. Geologic hazards and aggregate resources information are displayed and available for download on the [Washington Geologic Information Portal](#) and the [WGS website](#). We are also able to meet with local jurisdictions and the public to provide additional assistance.



GIS DATA



TRAINING

GMA RESOURCES

Department of Commerce Growth Management Services Periodic Update. <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/periodic-update/>

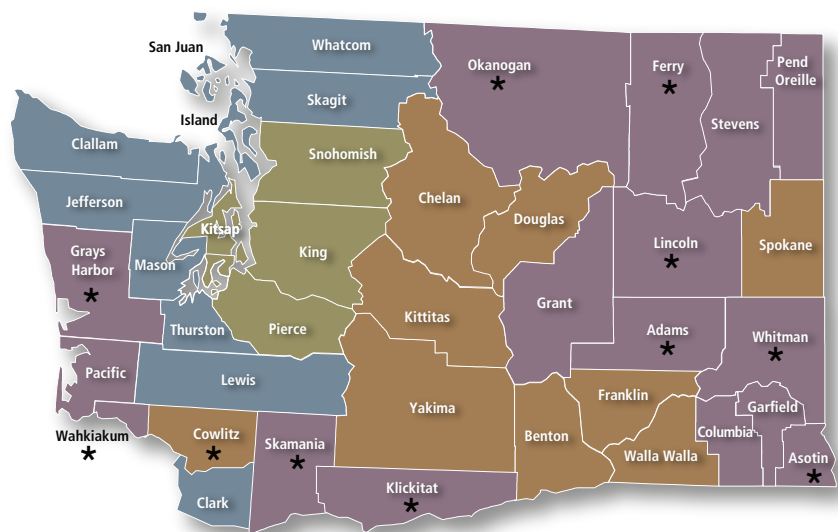
Department of Commerce Growth Management Resources. <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/>

Growth Management Act Best Available Science WAC 365-195. <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=365-195>

HOW CAN WGS GEOLOGIC PLANNING HELP YOU?

- ▶ Provide the best available science for many geologic hazards.
- ▶ Discuss the appropriate uses of our data and maps.
- ▶ Provide assistance with communication for local outreach about WGS science.
- ▶ Provide examples of land-use codes, outreach, and other information used by other jurisdictions.
- ▶ Review land-use codes related to geologic hazards.
- ▶ Assist with GMA periodic updates.
- ▶ Assist with understanding and implementing WGS aggregate resource lands mapping work into local land-use planning.

Growth Management Services Periodic Update Schedule - RCW 36.70A.130



Periodic Update Schedule



* Starred counties are partially planning under the Growth Management Act

The map above shows the periodic update schedule for each county in Washington. In 2024, the due date is December 31. In 2025, 2026, and 2027, the due date is June 30. The 11 starred counties are subject to critical areas and natural resource lands requirements only.

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES
 WASHINGTON GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/geology/geologic-planning>