

THE ROLE OF ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The purpose of the Adaptive Management Program is effective implementation of the Forest Practices Act and rules by making adjustments as quickly as possible to forest practices that are not achieving [resource objectives](#).

The science-based Adaptive Management Program complements the mitigation strategy, or forest practices rules outlined in the Forests & Fish Report (FFR) to protect fish and water quality, in two ways: 1) by addressing near-term uncertainties with initial prescriptions and 2) ensuring that forest practices will continue to meet the Endangered Species Act requirements over the long-term by improving knowledge and incorporating new information.

On June 5, 2006, the federal government approved a 50-year Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) endorsing Washington's Forest Practices Program for protecting fish and water quality.

Sustaining the 50-year HCP is based on the ability of forest practices rules to meet the goal of protecting resource objectives by changing over time. The AM process governs how change occurs, and features:

- Timeliness of change as a key element.
- A *closed-loop* system, requiring a policy decision.
- A process of change that applies science within the context of economic and social values.

The AM process addresses four key questions to ensure that the goal of meeting resource objectives and performance targets are met for five inputs: heat/water temperature, sediment, large woody debris, hydrology and forest chemicals.

- 1) Are the performance targets the right ones to meet the resource objectives?
- 2) Are additional performance targets needed to meet the resource objectives?
- 3) Are the prescriptions adequate to meet the performance targets?
- 4) Is compliance taking place with the prescriptions?

The Forests and Fish law specifies that changes to forest practices rules may occur through three avenues: 1) recommendations consistent with results from the scientifically based adaptive management process, 2) court mandates and 3) legislative direction.

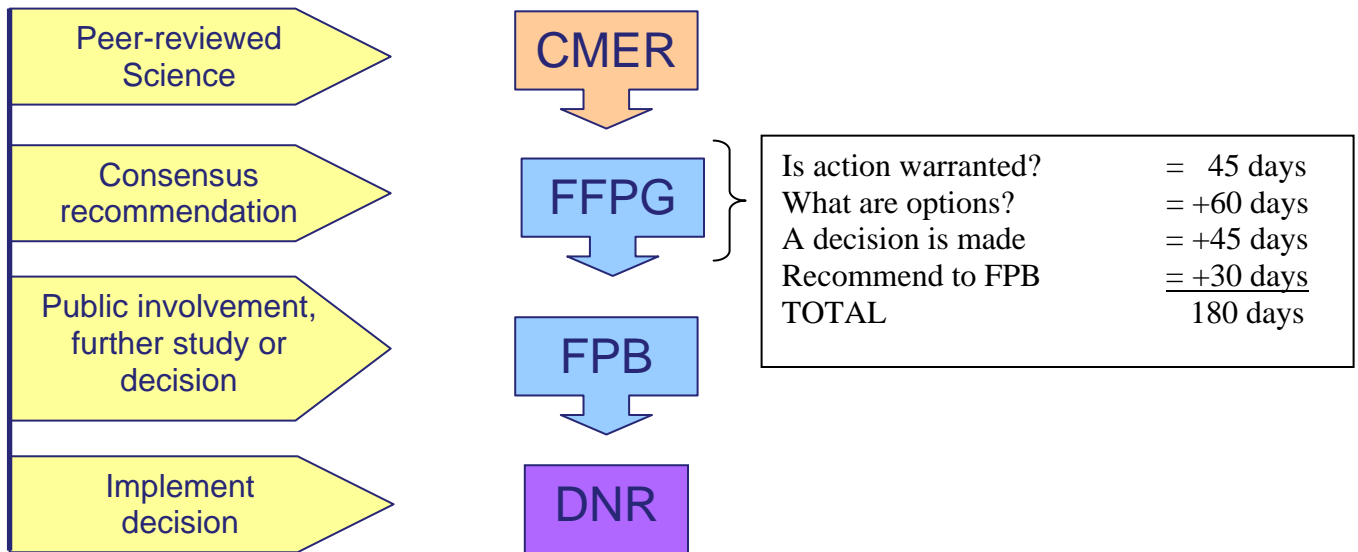
The Forest Practices Board formally established the adaptive management process which is managed and implemented by four entities:

- **Cooperative Monitoring Evaluation and Research Committee (CMER).** Appointed by the Forest Practices Board (FPB), CMER is charged with conducting scientific inquiry to inform policy representative and the FPB. By law, the committee is required to operate by consensus.
- **The Adaptive Management Program Administrator, within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).** Responsible for supporting CMER, a full time Program Administrator and other staff assures objectivity of the science work and manage the business affairs of the committee.

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- **Forests and Fish Policy Group (FFPG).** A self-appointed collaborative forum of policy level people from the Timber Fish Wildlife caucuses. Policy acts in an informal capacity advising CMER on routine matters and providing the FPB with consensus rule recommendations flowing from the scientific results provided by CMER.
- **Forest Practices Board (FPB).** Appointed by the Governor, is charged by the Forest Practices Act with writing forest practices rules for the State of Washington. The rules are administered by DNR.

The Adaptive Management Program governs change to the forest practices rules, and is unique in that it is a closed loop system, requiring a policy decision after a time limit. Timeliness of change is important. A six month time limit has been established within which to make policy decisions; otherwise the issue goes directly to the Forest Practices Board for resolution.



Resource Objectives for the Five Inputs are:

1. **Heat/water temperature:** Provide cool water by maintaining shade, groundwater temperature, flow, and other watershed processes controlling stream temperature.
2. **Sediment:** Prevent the delivery of excessive sediment to streams by protecting stream bank integrity, providing vegetative filtering, protecting unstable slopes and preventing the routing of sediment to streams.
3. **Large woody debris:** Provide complex in-and near-stream habitat by recruiting large woody debris an litter fall to streams.
4. **Hydrology:** Maintain surface and groundwater hydrologic regimes by disconnecting road drainage from the stream network, preventing increases in peak flows causing scour and maintaining the hydrologic continuity of wetlands.
5. **Forest Chemicals:** Use forest chemicals in a manner that meets or exceeds water quality standards and label requirements by buffering surface water and otherwise using best management practices.

