WAC 173-26-251 Shorelines of statewide significance. (1) Ap-
plicability. The following section applies to local governments pre-
paring master programs that include shorelines of statewide signifi-
cance as defined in RCW 90.58.030.

(2) Principles. Chapter 90.58 RCW raises the status of shorelines
of statewide significance in two ways. First, the Shoreline Management
Act sets specific preferences for uses of shorelines of statewide sig-
nificance. RCW 90.58.020 states:
"The legislature declares that the interest of all of the people
shall be paramount in the management of shorelines of statewide sig-
nificance. The department, in adopting guidelines for shorelines of
statewide significance, and local government, in developing master
programs for shorelines of statewide significance, shall give prefer-
cence to uses in the following order of preference which:
(1) Recognize and protect the statewide interest over local in-
terest;
(2) Preserve the natural character of the shoreline;
(3) Result in long term over short term benefit;
(4) Protect the resources and ecology of the shoreline;
(5) Increase public access to publicly owned areas of the shore-
lines;
(6) Increase recreational opportunities for the public in the
shoreline;
(7) Provide for any other element as defined in RCW 90.58.100
deemed appropriate or necessary."
Second, the Shoreline Management Act calls for a higher level of
effort in implementing its objectives on shorelines of statewide sig-
nificance. RCW 90.58.090(5) states:
"The department shall approve those segments of the master pro-
gram relating to shorelines of statewide significance only after de-
termining the program provides the optimum implementation of the poli-
cy of this chapter to satisfy the statewide interest."
Optimum implementation involves special emphasis on statewide ob-
jectives and consultation with state agencies. The state's interests
may vary, depending upon the geographic region, type of shoreline, and
local conditions. Optimum implementation may involve ensuring that
other comprehensive planning policies and regulations support Shore-
line Management Act objectives.

Because shoreline ecological resources are linked to other envi-
ronments, implementation of ecological objectives requires effective
management of whole ecosystems. Optimum implementation places a great-
er imperative on identifying, understanding, and managing ecosystem-
wide processes and ecological functions that sustain resources of
statewide importance.

(3) Master program provisions for shorelines of statewide signif-
icance. Because shorelines of statewide significance are major re-
sources from which all people of the state derive benefit, local gov-
ernments that are preparing master program provisions for shorelines
of statewide significance shall implement the following:
(a) Statewide interest. To recognize and protect statewide inter-
est over local interest, consult with applicable state agencies, af-
fected Indian tribes, and statewide interest groups and consider their
recommendations in preparing shoreline master program provisions. Rec-
ognize and take into account state agencies' policies, programs, and
recommendations in developing use regulations. For example, if an
anadromous fish species is affected, the Washington state departments
of fish and wildlife and ecology and the governor's salmon recovery
office, as well as affected Indian tribes, should, at a minimum, be consulted.

(b) Preserving resources for future generations. Prepare master program provisions on the basis of preserving the shorelines for future generations. For example, actions that would convert resources into irreversible uses or detrimentally alter natural conditions characteristic of shorelines of statewide significance should be severely limited. Where natural resources of statewide importance are being diminished over time, master programs shall include provisions to contribute to the restoration of those resources.

(c) Priority uses. Establish shoreline environment designation policies, boundaries, and use provisions that give preference to those uses described in RCW 90.58.020 (1) through (7). More specifically:

(i) Identify the extent and importance of ecological resources of statewide importance and potential impacts to those resources, both inside and outside the local government's geographic jurisdiction.

(ii) Preserve sufficient shorelands and submerged lands to accommodate current and projected demand for economic resources of statewide importance, such as commercial shellfish beds and navigable harbors. Base projections on statewide or regional analyses, requirements for essential public facilities, and comment from related industry associations, affected Indian tribes, and state agencies.

(iii) Base public access and recreation requirements on demand projections that take into account the activities of state agencies and the interests of the citizens of the state to visit public shorelines with special scenic qualities or cultural or recreational opportunities.

(d) Resources of statewide importance. Establish development standards that:

(i) Ensure the long-term protection of ecological resources of statewide importance, such as anadromous fish habitats, forage fish spawning and rearing areas, shellfish beds, and unique environments. Standards shall consider incremental and cumulative impacts of permitted development and include provisions to insure no net loss of shoreline ecosystems and ecosystem-wide processes.

(ii) Provide for the shoreline needs of water-oriented uses and other shoreline economic resources of statewide importance.

(iii) Provide for the right of the public to use, access, and enjoy public shoreline resources of statewide importance.

(e) Comprehensive plan consistency. Assure that other local comprehensive plan provisions are consistent with and support as a high priority the policies for shorelines of statewide significance. Specifically, shoreline master programs should include policies that incorporate the priorities and optimum implementation directives of chapter 90.58 RCW into comprehensive plan provisions and implementing development regulations.