

# Critical areas help is on the way for small communities

Does your small town or city need help with its critical areas ordinance?

The state is developing a new tool on how to develop and carry out a critical areas ordinance. This effort will assist the smallest communities in Washington craft workable development regulations to designate and protect critical areas under the Growth Management Act (GMA).

A sample critical areas ordinance and administrative approaches for varying city needs are being developed. They are based on successful local examples from around the state and the most recent state agency recommendations. Tips on including the best available science in the critical areas regulations will be offered.

A key goal of the project is to shorten and simplify the wording and administrative steps so small towns with limited staff can successfully interpret and administer their ordinance.



Small towns and cities face unique challenges in carrying out critical areas ordinances.

The state Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development is

looking for small city and town staff, planning commissioners, and elected officials to join an advisory group to assist with this project.

The advisory group will identify issues, discuss alternative approaches, and review a draft of the guidance. Travel costs for small city or town representatives can be covered through the department.



Geologically hazardous areas – such as the landslide area shown here – are one type of critical area. Others include frequently flooded areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, wetlands, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

The department is working with the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington State Association of Counties to let small communities know about this effort.

To learn more about the project or to take part, contact Doug Peters at 360-725-3046 or e-mail [douglasp@cted.wa.gov](mailto:douglasp@cted.wa.gov).

Photo Credits  
Stream/CTED-Rita R. Robison  
Landslide Area/DNR

June 15, 2006