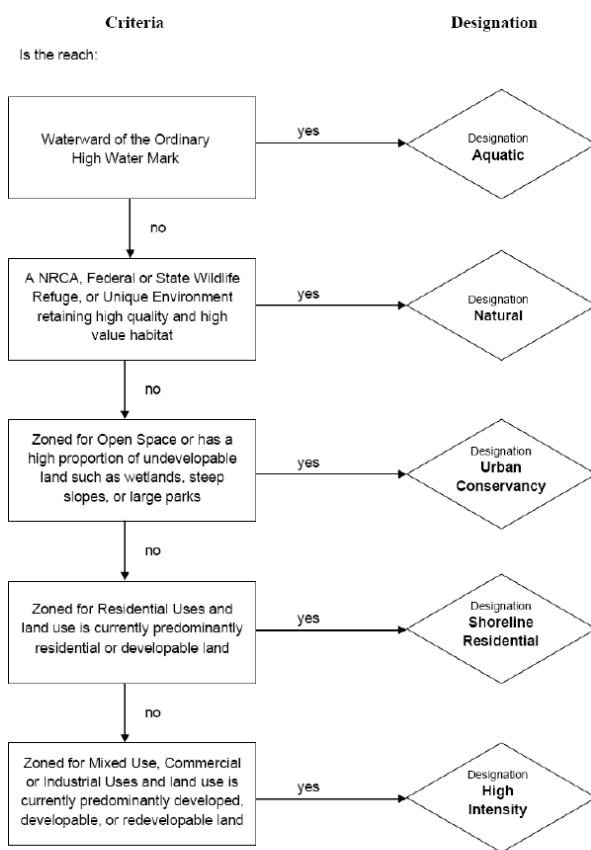# Thinking it through

Thinking about your shorelines in a methodical fashion can help to determine appropriate environment designations for shoreline reaches. Using a methodical approach can focus the discussion and steer the decision-making to be consistent with the purpose and designation criteria.

Several local governments have developed decisions trees or flow charts to help connect the shoreline reach to the appropriate environment designation. The flow charts should reflect the designation criteria for each environment designation. Note that zoning as it reflects existing development patterns is only one consideration – shoreline ecological functions and protection and restoration opportunities are also important.

Other methods such as photos can be used to help assign shorelines to environment designations. For example, for the Rural Conservancy designation, photos would show lower intensity resource uses including agriculture and forestry, recreation, residential, floodplains, low-intensity water-dependent uses and other uses listed in the designation criteria. You could then compare land use and ecological functions of a shoreline reach with the photos to see whether the reach fits within the Rural Conservancy designation.

Figure 13-6: A flow chart like this one, developed by the Thurston Regional Planning Council for use by the cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater, can help when making decisions about environment designations. Zoning reflects land use but is not the only consideration. Ecological functions and protection and restoration opportunities are also important