

Fish & Wildlife Habitat

ENVIRONMENTALLY CRITICAL AREAS

WHAT IS A FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION AREA?

- A fish & wildlife habitat conservation area is an area that is managed for maintaining populations of species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distribution so that the habitat available is sufficient to support viable populations over the long term, and isolated subpopulations are not created, as defined in WAC [365-190-130](#) and RCW [36.70A.030](#).
- They also include nonaquatic areas that serve a critical role in sustaining needed habitats and species for the functional integrity of the ecosystem, and which, if altered, may reduce the likelihood that the species will persist over the long term.

These areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Rare or vulnerable ecological systems, communities, and habitat or habitat elements including:
 - seasonal ranges
 - breeding habitat
 - winter range & movement corridors
 - areas with high relative population density or species richness

Areas that must be considered for classification & designation include:

- Priority habitats;
- Areas where endangered, threatened, and sensitive species, or priority species, have a primary association;
- Naturally occurring ponds under 20 acres and their submerged aquatic beds that provide fish or wildlife habitat;
- Waters of the state;
- Lakes, ponds, streams and rivers planted with game fish by a governmental or tribal entity; or
- State natural area preserves and natural resource conservation areas.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A fish and wildlife habitat conservation area and associated buffer may be altered only if the proposed alteration of the habitat and associated buffer does not degrade the functions of the habitat and associated buffer.
- Whenever activities are proposed in or adjacent to a fish and wildlife habitat conservation area or associated buffer, such area shall be protected through the application of measures in accordance with a critical area study prepared by a qualified professional and approved by the city of Lake Forest Park, and guidance provided by the appropriate state and/or federal agencies.
- Mitigation sites should be located to achieve contiguous fish and wildlife habitat corridors in accordance with a mitigation plan that is part of an approved critical area study to minimize the isolating effects of development on habitat areas.

The Planning Director shall condition approvals of activities allowed within or adjacent to a fish and wildlife habitat conservation area or its buffers, as necessary to minimize or mitigate any potential adverse impacts. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Establishment of buffer zones.
- Preservation of critically important vegetation.
- Limitation of public access to the habitat area.
- Seasonal restriction of activities.
- Establishment of a duration and timetable for periodic review of mitigation activities.
- Requirement of a performance bond, when necessary, to ensure completion and success of proposed mitigation.

Mitigation of alterations to fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas shall achieve equivalent or greater biologic functions. Mitigation shall address each function affected by the alteration to achieve functional equivalency or improvement on a per function basis.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area Buffers:

- **Establishment of Buffers.** The Planning Director shall require the establishment of buffer areas for activities in, or adjacent to, habitat conservation areas when needed to protect fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.
- **Seasonal Restrictions.** When a species is more susceptible to adverse impacts during specific periods of the year, seasonal restrictions may apply. Activities may be further restricted and buffers may be increased during the specified season.

CRITICAL AREA STUDY

Please see the [Environmentally Critical Areas Checklist](#) Help Topic for specifics about what should be included in a critical area study for Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas.

CRITICAL AREA AFFIDAVIT

It is the applicant's responsibility to disclose the presence of critical areas to the Planning Department. A notarized [Critical Area Affidavit](#) form will be required for all development proposals.

Questions?

For more information, please contact the Planning Department
aplanner@cityofflp.com
206-957-2837

Access to Information

Electronic versions of all forms, permits, applications, and codes are available on the Lake Forest Park website:
<http://www.cityofflp.com/>

Paper copies of all of the above are available at City Hall:
17425 Ballinger Way Northeast, Lake Forest Park, WA 98155
206-368-5440

DISCLAIMER: The information contained herein is meant to provide general information about Fish & Wildlife Habitats. This summary is not a substitute for the codes or regulations, and does not include information pertaining to other land use and building permit requirements and procedures. Additionally, the conditions and regulations described in this bulletin do not address any state or federal regulations and should not be construed as such. Environmentally Critical Area requirements can and do sometimes change after action by the City Council. Interested parties should always verify current requirements with the City Planning Department.