

## HABITATS OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE

In November, 1999 Island County adopted regulations protecting certain areas which have particular importance to Island County wildlife due to their outstanding habitat qualities. Maps maintained at Island County Planning and Community Development show these areas. **No permits, including building, subdivision, clearing and grading, septic, or other authorizations, may be granted until the site assessment requirements listed below have been satisfied.**

### Biological Site Assessment and Habitat Management Plan Requirements

The preparation and submittal of Biological Site Assessments (BSA) and Habitat Management Plans (HMP) is generally the responsibility of the applicant. A list of organizations and firms that perform this type of work is available at Planning and Community Development offices. In certain rare circumstances, County staff may prepare the BSA/HMP. The level of detail in these plans should be proportionate to the location, size and impacts of the project proposal. Usually, a BSA will include:

- a) A site plan indicating all Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas falling on or within one-hundred (100) feet of the portion of the subject property proposed for development.
- b) Descriptions of all Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas shown on the site plan;
- c) Description of the proposed project, including, but not limited to, associated earthwork (grading, excavation, filling), structures, utilities, and existing habitat other than Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (wetlands, other vegetated areas, including areas which may act as corridors, ravines or steep slopes, etc.);
- d) Analysis of impacts to the protected species or habitats. A discussion of impacts to all Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas must be included;
- e) Regulatory summary, identifying other agencies with jurisdiction;
- f) If adverse impacts to protected species or habitats are likely to occur, a conceptual mitigation plan, including an analysis of feasible mitigation alternatives that would mitigate adverse impacts of the project. The effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures shall be compared to other feasible alternatives. Mitigation alternatives shall be presented in the following order (in accordance with WAC 197-11-766):
  - (i) Avoiding the impact by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
  - (ii) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree of the action and its implementation, by using appropriate technology, or by taking affirmative steps to avoid or reduce impacts;
  - (iii) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
  - (iv) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance

operations during the life of the action;

- (v) Compensating for the impact by replacing, enhancing, or providing substitute resources or environments;
- (vi) Monitoring the impact and taking appropriate corrective measures.
- g) Best Management Practices, including a discussion of on-going maintenance practices that will assure protection of all Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas on-site after the project has been completed. If monitoring is required, this section shall include a description of proposed monitoring criteria, methods, and schedule.
- h) The recommendations of the BSA, once approved, shall be included as conditions of approval of the underlying permit.

If the Biological Site Assessment concludes that protected habitat may be affected by the proposed development, a Habitat Management Plan (HMPs) must be prepared by a professional ecologist, biologist or similarly-qualified professional, submitted, and approved. The HMP may be combined with the BSA. The HMP must consider Management Recommendations adopted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the specific attributes of the affected properties, such as, but not limited to, property size and configuration, surrounding land use, the practicability of implementing the HMP, and the adaptation of the species to human activity.

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*IMPORTANT NOTE - "Development Information Bulletins" (DIBs) are intended to assist the general public in understanding the effect of codes and regulations. DIBs are not complete statements of the laws and rules and should not be used as a substitute for them. If conflicts and questions arise, the code and regulations are the final authority. Because these regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult Island County staff to be sure you understand all current requirements before beginning any work. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the project meets requirements of all current codes and regulations.*

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