

NEW OVERWATER STRUCTURES, OR EXPANSION OF EXISTING OVERWATER STRUCTURES

Topics covered in this Development Information Bulletin (DIB) include:

- Requirements for New or Expansion of Overwater Structures
- Eelgrass Habitat Guidelines
- Qualified Divers

Requirements For New Or Expansion Of Overwater Structures

The State Department of Fish and Wildlife requires Preliminary Eelgrass Surveys for ANY proposed new overwater structures AND for ANY expansion of existing overwater structures. Examples of overwater structures include floating docks, piers, boat ramps, groins, jetties, breakwaters, and marine railings.

Any project of a large scope, or a commercial project, may require an Intermediate or Intensive Eelgrass Survey (contact the State Department of Fish and Wildlife for specifics (Julie Klacan at 360-466-4345 ext. 272)). Examples of larger projects include dredging, community beach nourishment programs. Examples of commercial projects include marinas and aquaculture. Larger projects may also be required to perform post project monitoring of the eelgrass (i.e. after impacts and/or mitigation).

A professional and qualified diver must perform the required Eelgrass Survey.

Below are guidelines for various types of Eelgrass Surveys and the List of Qualified Divers.

Preliminary Eelgrass/Macro Algae Habitat Survey Guidelines

Preliminary eelgrass/macro algae habitat survey guidelines will be applied for all proposed projects where eelgrass or significant macro algae habitats are suspected to be present in the vicinity of the proposed project.

The applicant shall contract a qualified diver/biologist to conduct the preliminary eelgrass/macro algae survey. The diver biologist must be able to demonstrate the ability to identify the predominant macro algae species native to the project area.

The preliminary eelgrass/macro algae survey shall include:

1. The diver/biologist will survey transects perpendicular to and/or parallel to the shoreline including the outer extremities of the proposed project site.
2. Survey transects will include the entire project site and will be spaced at a maximum of 40 foot intervals.

3. Transect locations will be referenced to a permanent physical feature within the project site.
4. The qualitative distribution of macro algae species along each transect will be documented.
5. Substrate characterization along each transect will be documented.
6. A project site map will be developed indicating the qualitative distribution of eelgrass/macro algae species, substrate characterization, approximate depth contours and the approximate location of the proposed project features.
7. Approximate depth contours will be established for the project site based on mean lower low water equal to 0.00 feet (MLLW = 0.00 feet). Tidal reference and correction should be noted.
8. Survey documentation will also include the time of survey, date of survey, turbidity/visibility, presence of invertebrate /vertebrate species and miscellaneous anecdotal observations pertinent to habitat characterization of the project site.
9. Preliminary surveys may be conducted at any time during the year. Surveys from June 1 through October 1 most accurately reflect macro algae distribution and are therefore preferable.
10. Results of the preliminary survey will be compiled and sent to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Area Habitat Biologist for review.

Note: Deviations from the preliminary survey guidelines will not be acceptable unless agreed to through prior consultation with the WDFW Area Habitat Biologist.

Qualified Divers - Marine Vegetation Surveys – A list of qualified biological consultants (including divers) is available by request from Planning staff.

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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