



ISLAND COUNTY

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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When is a BSA Required?

Guidance for development in Island County

A **Biological Site Assessment (BSA)** is a comprehensive environmental report that analyzes potential impacts to Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCAs) in Island County. BSAs are prepared by qualified environmental consultants.

- **Outside of shoreline jurisdiction**, FWHCAs are defined by the Island County (IC) Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO), section 17.02B.200, to include:
 - Areas with a primary association with endangered, threatened, and sensitive species;
 - Streams and waters of the state;
 - State natural area preserves, natural resource conservation areas, and state wildlife areas;
 - All areas designated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) through the Washington Natural Heritage Program (NHP);
 - Habitats and species of local importance, defined in section ICC 17.02B.230;
 - Western Toad occurrences;
 - A BSA may be required for upland development that may impact the following habitats and species within shoreline jurisdiction:
 - Areas where endangered, threatened and sensitive marine species have a primary association;
 - Commercial and recreational shellfish areas;
 - Kelp and eelgrass beds; herring smelt and other forage fish spawning areas; or
 - Lakes greater than twenty (20) acres in size.
- **Outside of shoreline jurisdiction, a BSA is required when** a development proposal is located within 1,000 feet of a habitat for a protected species or an identified FWHCA or its buffer, or when the applicant proposes to alter, decrease or average a standard stream buffer. The BSA guidelines are found in ICC 17.02B.400.B for upland proposals.
- **Within shoreline jurisdiction**, FWHCAs are defined by section the Shoreline Master Program (SMP), ICC 17.05A.070 to include:
 - Areas with which endangered, threatened, sensitive, and priority species listed by the federal or state government have a primary association;
 - Areas that are priority habitats as listed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife;

- Streams;
 - Commercial and recreational shellfish beds;
 - Kelp and eelgrass beds;
 - Herring, smelt, and sand lance spawning and holding areas;
 - Priority habitat areas for marine shellfish, including but not limited to pandalid shrimp, Dungeness crab, geoduck, hardshell clam, subtidal hardshell clam, and red sea urchin;
 - Areas with which priority species, as defined by WAC 173-26-020(29), have a primary association;
 - State natural area preserves;
 - State natural resource conservation areas;
 - Species and habitats of local importance;
 - Flora species included in the protected species list; and
 - All areas designated by the Department of Natural Resources ("DNR") through the Washington Natural Heritage Program (NHP).
- **Within shoreline jurisdiction, a BSA is required** for all proposals adjacent to marine waters, their associated wetlands, or any other FWHCA, per ICC 17.05A.090.C.13.C. Adjacent may be defined as within 100-feet of the proposed building site, or further depending on anticipated impact, per ICC 17.05A.090.C.13.C. The BSA guidelines are found in ICC 17.05A.090.C.13.d for shoreline proposals.
 - **Other key definitions from 17.02B.060:**
 - **A qualified environmental consultant** is a person with experience and training with expertise appropriate for the relevant critical area subject in accordance with WAC 365-195-905(4). A qualified professional must have a degree in wildlife biology, ecology, fisheries, or a closely related field and two (2) years of professional experience related to the subject species/habitat type.
 - **Regulated streams** include the following:
 - **Natural stream channels** means areas where naturally occurring surface waters produce a defined channel, bed, bank or side, and where there is clear evidence of the passage of water such as bedrock channels, gravel beds, sand and silt beds and defined channel swales. The channel or bed need not contain water year-round.
 - **Modified stream channels** follow and/or replace historic natural watercourses that have been significantly channelized, relocated, and/or constrained. Modified stream channels include segments of a stream that have been legally modified, and are in compliance with all necessary permits in effect at the time of its approval.
 - **Artificial stream channels** used by salmonids of any life stage, or that directly convey water from or through an existing regulated wetland. Artificially created channels that serve to connect other streams are regulated as streams.