

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCAs)

Lakes & Streams

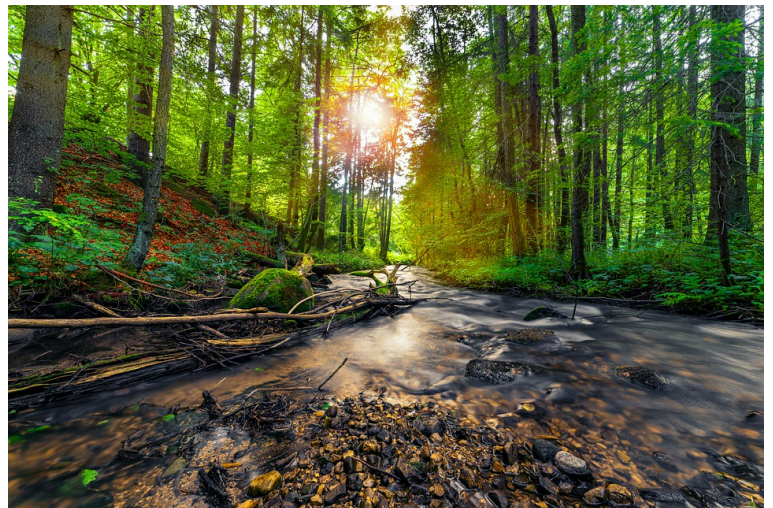
Lakes and streams are generally characterized by surface water that has produced a defined channel or bed. Lakes and streams essentially function as a drainage system that transports and stores water, sediment, and dissolved nutrients across the surface. They also provide important habitat for many fish and wildlife species. A variety of factors can affect the function and characteristics of a lake or stream system, including: precipitation patterns, geology, topography, and human activities such as dams, dikes, development, and removal of riparian vegetation.

Island County is home to different types of streams with varying regulatory requirements. Streams are classified according to WAC 222-16-030 to include the following:

- [Type S streams](#) are inventoried as “shorelines of the state” and are regulated under Island County Shoreline Master Program.
- [Type F streams](#) are those that are not Type S but still provide fish habitat.
- [Type Np streams](#) are perennial waters that do not contain fish habitat.
- [Type Ns streams](#) are seasonal waters that do not contain fish habitat, but are physically connected by an above-ground channel system to Type S, F, or Np waters.

Protective buffers preserve stream health.

Streamside zones are called riparian habitat, and support stream quality by controlling sediment filtration, providing wildlife habitat, maintaining temperature and microclimate, and supplying woody debris. In partnership with Island County, streams may be regulated by state agencies including the Department of Ecology and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Note that all critical areas under shoreline jurisdiction are regulated under Island County Shoreline Master Program [17.05A](#).



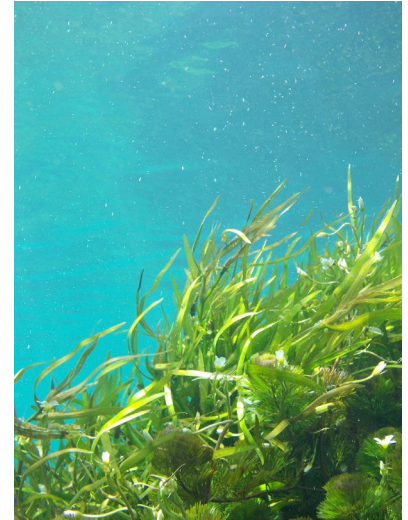
Surf Smelt and Sand Lance Spawning Areas

The nearshore environment in Island County provides important migratory corridors and habitat for forage fish spawning. Surf smelt and sand lance are schooling plankton feeder fish

that are preyed on by a variety of animal species in the marine food web. Both surf smelt and the sand lance spawn along marine shoreline areas, depositing their eggs on protected upper intertidal sand or sandy-gravel beaches. Juvenile fish rear in nearby bays and nearshore areas.

Kelp and Eelgrass Beds, Pacific Herring Spawning Areas

Eelgrass beds may be found along much of the shoreline in Island County especially in the many bays and harbors such as Holmes Harbor, Penn Cove, Dugualla Bay, Livingston Bay, and Crescent Harbor. Kelp forests and eelgrass beds provide forage, spawning and refuge areas for a number of marine species, including waterfowl, crab, snails, shrimp, and the Pacific Herring, an important local forage fish. Preservation of kelp and eelgrass beds also serves to protect local beaches from erosion by softening the force of waves against the shoreline



Habitats and Species of Local Importance

Habitats and species of local importance include habitats that support both vulnerable and recreationally important species.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Listed Species and Habitat

Listed species are those officially designated by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife and/or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) as endangered, threatened, sensitive, or candidate.

Resources for FWHCA regulatory requirements in Island County:

- Island County Critical Areas Ordinance [17.02B](#).
- Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources [Natural Heritage Program](#)
- WDFW, [Hydraulic Project Approval \(HPA\)](#)
- WDFW, [Priority Habitats and Species \(PHS\)](#)
- [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service \(USFWS\) Endangered Species](#) information
- [USFWS Bald eagle permitting](#) information
- Washington Department of Ecology, [State Environmental Policy Act \(SEPA\)](#)