

## Critical Areas and Shorelines

In Island County, wetlands and streams within shoreline jurisdiction are regulated by the [Island County Shoreline Master Plan, 17.05A](#). Subsection 17.05A.090.C., Environmental protection and critical areas, outlines the zoning requirements for critical areas in shoreline. Shoreline jurisdiction is measured 200-ft landward from the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of the shoreline in question. The Shoreline Master Plan requires that all shoreline use and development to maintain shoreline ecological processes and protect the natural character of the shoreline.

[Island County GeoMap](#) is a great starting place for determining shoreline jurisdiction and overlap with critical areas. Apply the “Critical Areas” and “Shoreline Environment Designations” layers to review your parcel.

### Environmental documentation:

Development adjacent to marine waters, their associated wetlands, or any other Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area (FWHCA) requires a biological site assessment (BSA), prepared by an environmental professional. If the BSA concludes that protected habitat may be affected, a habitat management plan is involved.



### Shorelines and streams:

Streams within shoreline jurisdiction require protective buffers to preserve riparian health, to include:

- Type F stream (shorelines of the state): 150-feet
- Type F streams (not shorelines of the state, but provide fish habitat): 100-feet
- Type Np streams (perennial stream not providing fish habitat): 50-feet
- Type Ns streams (seasonal non-fish streams): 50-feet

Buffer determinations may vary for specific situations, outlined in ICC 17.02A.090.h. Buffers are intended to protect natural resources and shoreline functions, and are required to be well vegetated with native plants. Up to twenty (20) percent of the buffer area can be disturbed with a pervious, pedestrian trail.

### Shorelines and wetlands:

In the shoreline, wetland buffer requirements are determined on a case-by-case basis, relying on Wetland Reports prepared by qualified environmental consultants. Buffer determinations are based on:

- Land use intensity
- Presence of wetland outlet
- Type of wetland, with special case buffers for bogs, coastal lagoon wetlands, delta estuary wetlands, and other estuarine wetlands.
- Habitat function score

### Washington Natural Heritage Program Areas:

For designated significant plant communities dominated by Big Leaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) or Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), natural vegetation between the OHWM and a line fifty (50) feet landward of the top of banks and bluffs ten (10) feet or higher shall be retained, except for removal of hazardous, diseased or damaged trees and to allow for pedestrian waterfront access.

For white-top aster (*Aster curtus*) and golden indian paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*) communities, a BSA and HMP are required to ensure protection of the protected species.

Requests for permit approval by Island County will be acted on only after consultation with the Washington Natural Heritage Program.

### Protection standards: Nesting sites and territory:

The following buffers and standards apply to all Heron, Osprey, and Bald Eagle nesting sites within shoreline jurisdiction:

- Heron—1,000 feet for non-residential development and 300 feet for residential development.
- Osprey—600 feet for non-residential development and 200 feet for residential development.
- Bald Eagle— Applicant shall submit documentation showing compliance with all applicable federal laws and regulations prior to development.

### Resources:

Please contact the Island County [Critical Areas Planner](#) with specific questions about shorelines and critical areas regulatory requirements. See additional resources below:

- [Shoreline Master Program \(SMP\) Overview](#)
- [Natural Heritage Program](#)
- [Priority Habitats and Species \(PHS\)](#)
- [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service \(USFWS\) Endangered Species](#)
- [USFWS Bald eagle permitting](#)

