



Wetland Report Requirements

A. Applicability. A wetland delineation report and a wetland rating / buffer determination report will be required whenever a development is located on or near a site that does or may contain a wetland, and the development has the potential to affect the wetland or its required buffer. In most cases these reports are combined into one wetland report.

B. Qualified Professional. The applicant is responsible for hiring a qualified professional to complete critical area reports for wetlands. A qualified professional can be either a certified Professional Wetland Scientist; a non-certified professional wetland scientist with a minimum of five (5) years of experience in the field of wetland science, including experience preparing wetland reports; or a professional who demonstrates expertise in wetland science to the satisfaction of the planning director.

The City cannot recommend specific consultants. Some useful sources for finding consultants include:

- The Society of Wetland Scientists provides lists of certified Professional Wetland Scientists: <http://www.wetlandcert.org/search.html> (Note that if you search on Washington State, you will end up with multiple pages of scientists.)
- Telephone book yellow page listings under Environmental Consultants and Environmental Site Assessment
- Engineering and architectural firms may be able to recommend consultants that they have worked with.

Please note that when the City has concerns about the accuracy or completeness of a report, the Planning Director has the authority to hire an outside consultant at the applicant's expense to review the report.

C. Wetland Delineation and Rating Reports. The purpose of a wetland delineation report is to convey an objective, factual picture of the extent and location of wetlands at a given site. The purpose of a wetland rating report is to convey an objective, factual analysis of the functions of the wetland, in order to determine the appropriate wetland buffer needed to protect those functions. The reports are based on the collection of field data and review of pertinent supporting information.

Wetland Delineation Field Procedures and Standards. Delineators shall use the *Washington State Wetlands Identification and Delineation Manual* (Washington State Department of Ecology, March 1997). Delineators shall evaluate and affirm in writing that the entire project site and surrounding vicinity within a minimum of 225 feet of the project boundaries was examined on the ground (except where access is denied) and whether wetlands are present within these areas. Other critical areas, such as streams and geologically hazardous areas must also be identified. When a wetland is located partially or entirely off-site and access is denied, the delineator shall detail the information that was used to evaluate the location of the wetland.

Delineators shall uniquely identify the boundaries of each wetland in the field by affixing colored, lettered and numbered flagging to fixed objects such as wood vegetation or survey stakes (e.g., Wetland A, Flags #A1 - A10, Wetland B, Flags #B-1 to B10, etc.). Flagging should be placed at intervals no greater than 40 feet.

Delineators shall uniquely identify in the field each sample plot site for which data are recorded by affixing colored, lettered and numbered flagging to fixed objects. Large and/or complex sites are likely to need many sample points to adequately reflect ground conditions, whereas smaller, less complex sites may only need a few sample points.

Soils must be examined to a depth below the A horizon, or to 18 inches, whichever is greater, per the *Washington State Wetlands Identification and Delineation Manual*. Soil characteristics (e.g. Munsell colors, mottling, oxidized rhizospheres, textures, moisture content, etc.) must be described throughout the entire soil profile examined.

Field observations of hydrologic connections among wetlands or between on-site or off-site streams and wetlands shall be noted on the data sheets, shown on the wetland delineation map, and fully discussed in the report.

Delineators shall take at least 2 color ground photographs of each wetland for inclusion as an appendix to the wetland report.

Wetland Delineation Maps. Wetland delineation maps shall show the following information:

1. Property boundaries, reference streets, north arrow and scale.
2. Wetland boundary flags with flag numbers
3. Sample points corresponding to field data sheets.
4. Contours at the smallest easily available interval, but in no case at intervals greater than 5 feet. For large developments, plats and short plats, or where mitigation is proposed, 1 or 2 foot contour intervals surveyed by a qualified professional surveyor may be required.
5. Observed hydrologic connections among on-site and off-site wetlands and streams.
6. Photo points where photographs of site wetlands and/or streams were taken.

Wetland Delineation Report Contents. Wetland reports shall include the following:

1. Field data sheets, documenting vegetation, soils and hydrology observations at indicated sample points.
2. Date and weather conditions when the delineation occurred.
3. Colors of flagging used to identify wetland boundaries and sample points.
4. Vicinity map
5. Site plan (see the Site Plan Requirements Checklist)
6. Methodology. Describe the delineator's approach to collecting data, and any modification to the standard sampling methodology and rationale. Include a description of how plant dominance was established and why the methodology used was adequate to characterize the vegetation. The more complex the plant community is the more likely that quantitative sampling will be necessary.

7. Results and Discussion. This must include the rationale for the determination of the wetland boundary and how it was subsequently marked or flagged. This discussion must be supported by the data as documented on the field data sheets. Other information to support the conclusions of the delineator that may be included are a discussion of site topography, the location of plant communities, site land use history, soil survey mapping and soils descriptions, and unusual site characteristics.
8. Summary.
9. Literature cited.
10. The qualifications of the person completing the delineation. (See section B. above). The accuracy of the report must be certified by the professional who is the principal author of the report. When the City has concerns about the accuracy or completeness of a report, the Planning Director has the authority to hire an outside consultant at the applicant's expense to review the report.

Wetland Rating and Buffer Reports. Wetlands shall be rated using the *Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western Washington Revised* (Hruby T, 2004). Wetland rating and buffer reports shall include the following information:

1. An aerial photograph with the boundary of the wetland marked.
2. The completed Wetland Rating Form - Western Washington. The most recent version of the form shall be used (as of August 2006, Version 2 is the most recent).
3. The standard wetland buffer width per EMC 19.37.110, including a discussion of the required mitigation measures based on the habitat function score.
4. When the wetland scores 20 points or more for habitat, identify any adjacent Priority Habits as defined by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and identify the vegetation between the wetland and that habitat per EMC. 19.37.110.2a.
5. A description of the vegetation in the buffer, and whether buffer enhancement or restoration is required per EMC 19.37.110.A.6. When buffer enhancement or restoration is required the report shall include an enhancement plan which specifically addresses soils, slopes, existing and proposed vegetation, temporary irrigation, maintenance, monitoring and contingency.
6. Whether any of the conditions for Increased Standard Wetland Buffer Width in EMC 19.37.110.B are applicable.
7. For category IV Wetlands, whether the conditions for Standard Buffer Width Reduction in EMC 19.37.110.C are met. If so, see the requirements in the Wetland, Stream, or Lake (Pond) Buffer Width Reduction Application Packet.
8. The qualifications of the person completing the rating, including whether they have taken the Coastal Training Program's (Ecology's) 2-day wetland rating class - Using the Revised Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western WA. (See Section B above). The accuracy of the report must be certified by the professional who is the principal author of the report. When the City has concerns about the accuracy or completeness of a report, the Planning Director has the authority to hire an outside consultant at the applicant's expense to review the report.

D. Wetland Alteration and Mitigation. If wetland alteration and mitigation is proposed, please refer to the requirements in the Wetland, Stream, or Lake (Pond) Alteration Application Packet.