



Snohomish County
Planning and Development Services
September 2015

Summary of Amendments to Chapter 30.62A SCC - Wetlands and Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Submittal requirements – 30.62A.130(1)(f)

Reduce the distance required from a proposed project site to identify critical areas to the maximum buffer that overlaps on the project site. Previously, the code required applicants to identify critical areas out beyond the maximum buffers that could overlap onto a project site.

Permanent identification and recording – 30.62A.160(3)

Previously, subdivisions occurring on rural designated lands were required to put all critical areas and buffers in separate tracts, thereby reducing potential lot yields. The change allows critical areas and buffers occurring on rural subdivisions to be protected in easements on the lots, which can be counted in the lot yield rather than in separate tracts. A fence is required to identify the boundary of the critical area. There is a history of rural subdivisions being denied because not all the property can be counted in the lot yield.

Previously approved Critical Areas Site Plans – 30.62A.160(4)

This section allows for new development proposals that already have recorded Critical Areas Site Plans (CASP) to redevelop without changes in the protection recorded on the CASP provided that it occurs “consistent with previously approved Critical Areas Site Plans.”

Wetland classification - 30.62A.230(2)

PDS has reviewed recent changes to the wetland rating system developed by the Department of Ecology. The rating system ranks wetlands based on their sensitivity to disturbance, rarity, values, and functions. The purpose of the update by Ecology was to incorporate new BAS. According to a study conducted by Ecology, on average, wetland categories will be lower with corresponding decreases in some buffers.

Replacement ratios for temporary impacts to buffers and wetlands – 30.62A.320(3)(b) & 30.62A.340(4)(b)

Previously, impacts occurring in critical areas or buffers must replace the area of impact at replacement ratios ranging between 1 to 1 and 12 to 1, depending on the type of vegetation or wetland. It does not take into account minor impacts that can be easily or quickly mitigated. The change reduces the required impact replacement ratio to 1 to 1 for minor impacts that can be restored to pre-disturbance conditions within one year.

Minor development activities exceptions – 30.62A.510

This change adds site investigative work, necessary for land use application submittals, to be included to the list of activities with a low potential for significant impacts. This change would

result in site investigative work being treated with greater flexibility with respect to impact mitigation.

Single family residential development exceptions – 30.62A.520

This section allows for a 4,000 square foot encroachment into buffers on lots constrained by critical areas and buffers where there are no reasonable alternatives outside of the buffers. Several changes to this section were made, including; allowing increased flexibility for necessary utilities and roads to go through buffers, and limitations on the maximum allowed area of any additions to existing structures located in a buffer - 2,000 sq.ft. or ½ of the existing structure, whichever is less