Help Topic 3.1.B

Streams

ENVIRONMENTALLY CRITICAL AREAS

LAKE FOREST PARK
Washington
17425 Ballinger Way NE
Lake Forest Park, WA 98155
206-368-5440

WHAT IS A STREAM?

- A stream is defined as an area where surface waters have created a channel or bed, which contains water for at least part of the year. Note that water does not have to be present throughout the year.
- An entirely artificial watercourse, such as a ditch, is not considered a stream unless it now contains fish known as "salmonids" (see below) or if it conveys surface water naturally occurring prior to alteration of the land.

WHY ARE STREAMS IMPORTANT?

- Streams provide spawning and breeding habitat for fish and other wildlife.
- Streams shape our landscape, transporting material from one location to another and creating mineral-rich soils downstream.
- The area surrounding the streams, known as riparian habitat, provides stream bank stability, and food, water, shelter, and shade for reptiles, birds, mammals, fish and amphibians.

WHAT IS A "SALMONID"?

- A "salmonid" includes any of the species of salmon, trout, whitefish or char.

STREAM TYPES

Designating types of streams is useful because development restrictions can be tailored to each stream's uniqueness and contributions to the environment.

- Type S streams are those that are considered "shorelines of the state," which have state-wide significance. These streams are regulated through the Shoreline Master Program.
- Type F streams are those that are within defined channels, having one-half acre or greater surface area at seasonal low water, and which in any case contain fish habitat.
- Type Np streams are intermittent or ephemeral during years of normal rainfall, and do not contain fish habitat.
- Type Ns streams are seasonal, non-fish habitat streams in which surface flow is not present for some portion of the year of normal rainfall, and are not located downstream from any Np waters. Ns streams must be physically connected by aboveground channel to Type S, F, or Np streams.

*In most cases, determination of stream type requires that a report prepared by a qualified professional be submitted to the Planning Department.

WETLANDS ASSOCIATED WITH STREAMS

A qualified professional biologist is required to check for and disclose the presence of any wetlands when streams and their buffers are located on the proposed development site. See Information Bulletin 2.7 for more information on wetlands.

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Questions?

For more information, please contact the Planning Department
aplanner@cityoflfp.com
206-957-2837

Access to Information

Electronic versions of all forms, permits, applications, and codes are available on the Lake Forest Park website: http://www.cityoflfp.com/

Paper copies of all of the above are available at City Hall:
17425 Ballinger Way Northeast, Lake Forest Park, WA 98155
206-368-5440

STREAM BUFFERS

A "buffer" of land is required in order to protect streams from human activities. No construction, clearing, grading or other activities are allowed within this buffer or within the critical area. In addition, structures must also be kept outside a 15-foot building setback from the edge of the stream buffers (see Fig 2-1).

- Buffers are measured from the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of the stream channel, and extend in either direction from the stream (see Fig 2-2).
- The OHWM is typically found on the bank of streams at the edge of vegetation. The OHWM may be placed at the top of the bank if this line is not visible or where the vegetation changes to an upland type.
- Buffers are measured horizontally and are more accurately measured on a map rather than "walked-off" on the ground unless it is perfectly level.
- If a stream is "braided", where more than one channel exists, the OHWM must include all braids.

The minimum width of the buffer depends on the stream type (*See also Fig 2-2*):

Stream Type	Standard Buffer
Type F	115 Feet
Type Np	50 Feet
Type Ns	50 Feet

Drawings not to scale

Fig 2-1:

Buffer & Building Setbacks

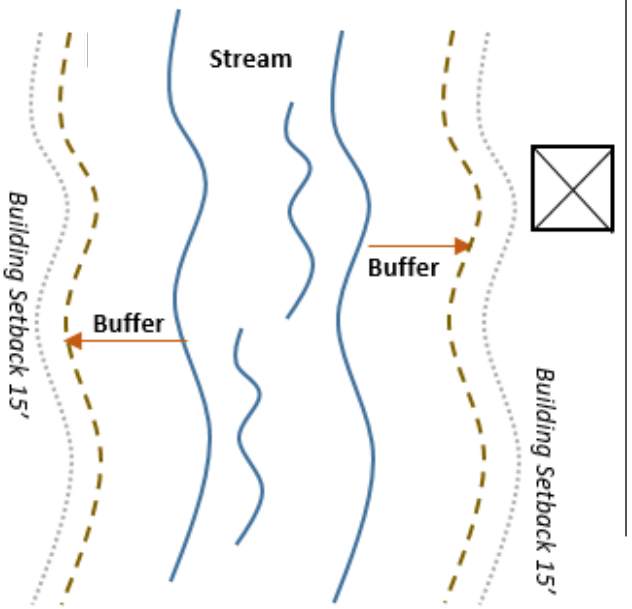
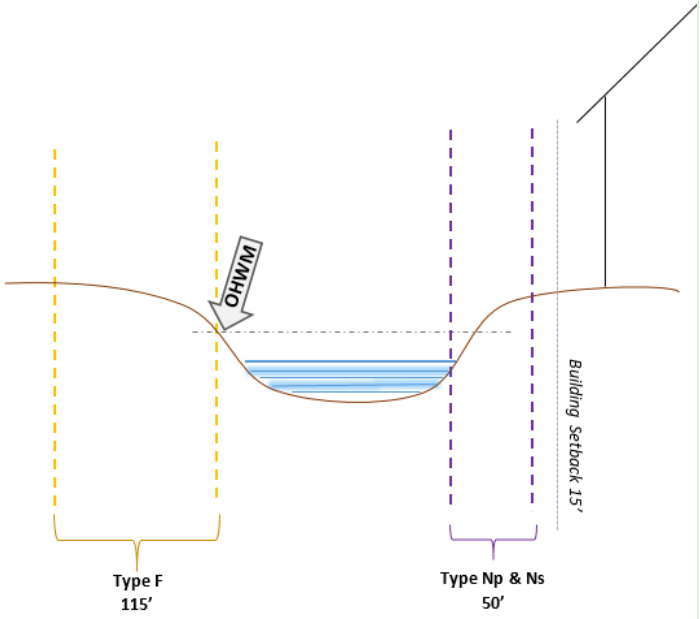


Fig 2-2:

Minimum Buffer Width by Stream Type



BUFFER REDUCTION

The buffer width may be reduced by 25 percent whenever, in the judgment of the Planning Director, a smaller width is adequate to protect the stream and habitat functions and the development proposal will result in a net improvement of stream and buffer functions. Decisions will be based upon a critical area study that addresses the mitigation necessary achieve the net improvement and how well the mitigation complies with the performance criteria in LFPMC 16.16.120 and 16.16.130.

STREAM ENHANCEMENT

An enhancement is an action that increases the functions and values of a stream, wetland or other critical areas. For more information and resources regarding enhancement and restoration projects contact the City of Lake Forest Park Planning Department.

STREAMS ADJACENT TO SLOPES OR WETLANDS

Any stream adjoined by a riparian wetland or other contiguous critical area shall have the buffer required for the stream class involved or the buffer which applies to the wetland or other critical area, whichever is greater.

ADDITIONAL STREAM PROTECTION

- Vegetation or wildlife that are not native to the Pacific Northwest cannot be introduced into a stream buffer without approval by the City of Lake Forest Park.
- The use of herbicides, pesticides and hazardous substances is prohibited in stream corridors or buffers unless it is demonstrated that special circumstances require their use.
- All protected stream areas must be well marked on site prior to any construction activity. All permitted alterations are subject to conditions and requirements administered through a critical areas work permit.

PERMITTED ALTERATIONS

Consult the City of Lake Forest Park Critical Areas Code and the Planning Department for more specific information about:

- Stream crossings
- Stream enhancements
- Trails
- Stream relocations
- Stream channel stabilization
- Stream restoration
- Utilities in a stream buffer

Any alteration of streams or their buffers are strictly regulated and require mitigation plans, as well as a critical area study and a critical areas work permit.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Development proposals, including subdivisions, short subdivisions, variance requests, conditional use permits and reasonable use requests that contain stream corridors will be required to set aside the critical area in a separate preservation tract called a conservation easement. This tract shall be recorded on all documents of title or record for all affected lots.

OTHER JURISDICTIONAL REVIEW

Applications for work within a stream corridor or its associated buffer must also meet the requirements of other jurisdictions. Additional requirements *may* include, but are not limited to:

- Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife may be required.
- State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review. SEPA is administered through the City of Lake Forest Park with review by several outside agencies.