

CRITICAL AREA PROGRAM AMENDMENT

PREAMBLE

Because the critical areas regulations must be consistent with the comprehensive plan, each comprehensive plan should set forth the underlying policies for the jurisdiction's critical areas program. [WAC 365-196-485(1)(e)]

In pursuing the environmental protection and open space goals of the act, such policies should identify nonregulatory measures for protecting critical areas as well as regulatory approaches. Nonregulatory measures include, but are not limited to: Incentives, public education, and public recognition, and could include innovative programs such as the purchase or transfer of development rights. When such policies are incorporated into the plan (either in a separate element or as a part of the land use element), the consistency of the regulations can be readily assessed. [WAC 365-196-485(1)(e)]

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Establish a Critical Areas Program and set forth its underlying policies and priorities for Land Use, including:

- Avoiding environmental impacts through appropriate land use designations [WAC 365-196-485(4)].

- Avoid directing new growth to areas with high probability of conflicts between new development and protecting critical areas [WAC 365-196-485(4)]

- Identifying open space corridors within and between urban growth areas for multiple purposes, including those areas needed as critical habitat by wildlife [WAC 365-196-485(1)(c)]

- Retaining and Expanding Open Space [RCW 36.70A.020]

- Conserving Fish and Wildlife Habitat including protecting wildlife corridors and preventing stormwater adverse impacts on aquatic habitat [RCW 36.70A.020]

- Preserving natural environment including mature tree and tree canopy goals from the Urban Forest Management Plan [RCW 36.70A.020]

- Enhancing the State's High Quality of Life, Including Air and Surface Water Quality [RCW 36.70A.020]

- Identifying Critical Areas and adjacent buffer areas with an overlay designation on the Future Land Use and Zoning Maps.

- Reviewing drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff in the area and nearby jurisdictions and provide guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state or waters entering Puget Sound. [RCW 36.70A.070]