



PLANNING AND LAND SERVICES DEPARTMENT

SINGLE-FAMILY WETLAND CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Listed below is a step-by-step process for expediting wetland reviews for single-family development. It is called the Single-Family Certification Process. It shall **only** be used for single-family development outside regulated wetlands or buffers. This process shall be used for single-family homes and associated features such as garages, fences, lawns, septic fields, and wells. The single-family wetland certification can only be used one time for one single-family residence and one detached garage. It shall not be used for new agricultural activities, including pole barns, forest practice activities, land division, ADUs, or “mother-in-law” dwellings.

The certification form shall not be used for compliance with Chapter 18E.40 – Regulated Fish and Wildlife Species and Habitat Conservation Areas.

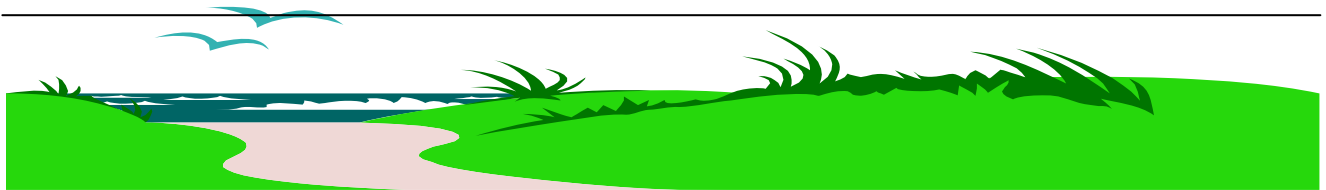
This process is intended to assist the single-family property owner, but it must be noted that the property owner is responsible for any errors committed by the biologist, for complying with all wetland regulations, and for providing mitigation if damage occurs to wetlands or buffers.

- 1) Pierce County staff will check for wetland indicators on the Pierce County Geographical Information System, CountyView, and/or QuickView when requested to complete a Critical Areas and Resource Lands (CARLS) Checklist for a specific parcel. This information will be used to determine if jurisdictional wetlands *may* exist on the property and if wetland review is required. Wetland indicators include Pierce County inventoried wetlands, Department of Natural Resources stream mapping, the National Wetland Inventory (NWI), hydric soils, and flood zones A and B. **Not all wetlands within Pierce County have been inventoried. Your property may have wetlands or buffers even if no indicators are mapped. If you suspect that your property contains a wetland or buffer, you should consider having your site inspected by a private biologist in order to avoid an inadvertent violation of the law.**
- 2) If one or more wetland indicators are identified within 315 feet of a proposed regulated activity, the site will need to be inspected prior to issuance of any permits or performing the activity. A regulated activity includes, but is not limited to, any construction, filling, grading, logging, clearing or altering vegetation (see attached list of regulated activities).
- 3) The Single-Family Wetland Certification shall be used when a private wetland specialist can certify that there are no regulated wetlands within 315 feet of the proposed activity, or that any regulated activity will occur outside the wetland and buffer areas. Both the certification and site plan must be signed by a wetland specialist recognized by Pierce County. **The Single-Family Wetland Certification form is valid for one year from date of specialist’s signature.** A list of recognized wetland specialists is available at the Pierce County Development Center.
- 4) The County will allow continued processing of the building permit with no additional wetland review if the wetland specialist demonstrates that all regulated activities will be located outside of the wetland buffer.
- 5) The Single-Family Wetland Certification must be signed and dated by the property owner to show that he/she agrees to allow Pierce County staff to enter the property, that he/she understands that the County reserves the right to deny acceptance of incorrect or inaccurate certifications, and that he/she is responsible for limiting all regulated activity to areas outside of wetlands and their buffers.
- 6) If a wetland or wetland buffer is located on the property within 315 feet of the proposed activity, a wetland specialist must install blue wetland buffer boundary signs along the outer edge of the required wetland buffer to distinguish the areas to be left undisturbed and protected (see attached standards).

- 7) If there are regulated wetland buffers within 315 feet of the proposed activity, the following actions must be completed prior to submitting the certification form:
 - a. The Wetland Specialist must place wetland buffer signs at the edge of the buffer.
 - b. The Wetland Specialist must complete and sign an affidavit of buffer posting (attached).
 - c. The affidavit is to be submitted along with the certification form.
 - d. Prior to submitting the affidavit and certification form for review they must be recorded at the Pierce County Auditor's Office in accordance with Sections 18E.10.070 F. and 18E.10.140 Appendix B.
 - e. The Auditor's Office Recording Cover Sheet must be completed and attached with the affidavit and certification form.

- 8) If a regulated activity is proposed within a wetland, buffer, or buffer setback, the certification form cannot be used, and the formal Single-Family Wetland Application process must be followed. This process is defined in Section 18E.30.030 C.2.

Note: Please consult a current fee schedule for Wetland Certification and other wetland application review fees.



Regulated Activities 18E.20.030

The following activities are regulated within wetlands, critical fish and wildlife habitat areas, aquifer recharge areas, landslide hazard areas, erosion hazard areas, flood hazard areas, and/or their buffers unless exempted by Section 18E.20.030:

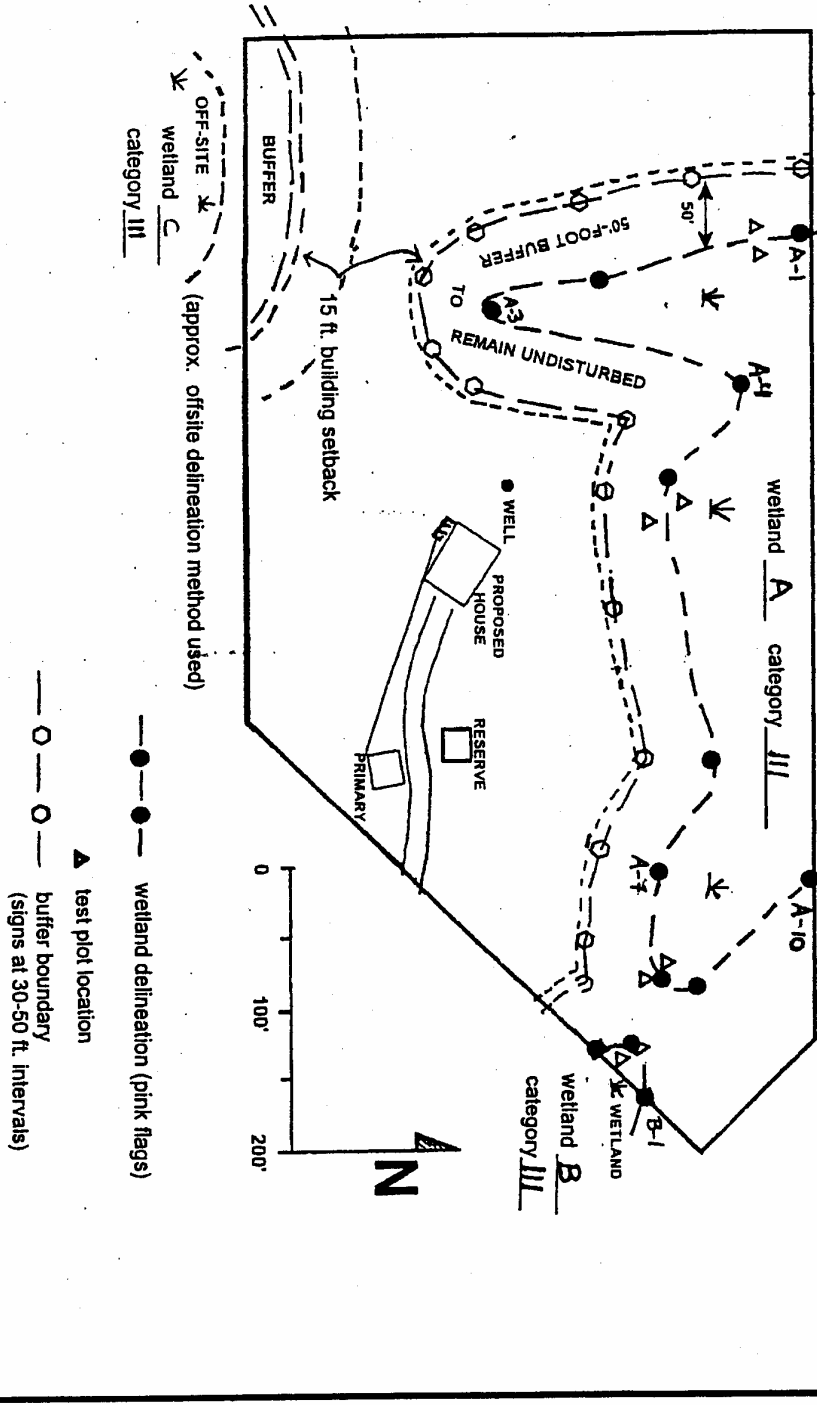
- Removing, excavating, disturbing, or dredging soil, sand, gravel, minerals, organic matter, or materials of any kind;
- Dumping, discharging or filling;
- Draining, flooding or disturbing the water level or water table. In addition, an activity which involves intentional draining, flooding or disturbing the water level or water table in a wetland or stream, in which the activity itself occurs outside the regulated area, shall be considered a regulated activity;
- Driving piling or placing obstructions, including placement of utilities;
- Constructing, reconstructing, demolishing, or altering the size of any structure or infrastructure;
- Altering the character of a regulated area by destroying or altering vegetation through clearing, harvesting, cutting, intentional burning, shading, or planting;
- Activities which result in significant changes in water temperature or physical or chemical characteristics of wetland or stream water sources, including changes in quantity of water and pollutant levels;
- Application of pesticides, fertilizers and/or other chemicals, unless demonstrated not to be harmful to the regulated area;
- The division or redivision of land pursuant to Title 16, PCC and boundary line adjustments; and
- The creation of impervious surfaces.

EXAMPLE

Wetland Specialist Signature _____

Date _____

NOTE: THIS IS NOT A SURVEY. A MORE ACCURATE MAP MAY BE PREPARED BY HAVING THE WETLAND BOUNDARY DELINEATED AND SURVEYED.



CRITICAL AREA BUFFER BOUNDARY SIGN STANDARDS

In compliance with Pierce County Ordinance No. 2006-53s, 2006-103s, effective March 1, 2007, Title 18E Development Regulations-Critical Areas, the following standards apply to the placement of the permanent buffer boundary signs:

WETLAND BUFFER SIGNS:

Size: 4" x 6" rectangle
Color: Black lettering on azure blue background
Wording: WETLAND BUFFER BOUNDARY
PIERCE COUNTY PLANNING AND LAND SERVICES

STREAM BUFFER SIGNS:

Size: 6" x 4" rectangle
Color: Black lettering on azure blue background
Wording: STREAM BUFFER BOUNDARY
PIERCE COUNTY PLANNING AND LAND SERVICES

WILDLIFE BUFFER SIGNS:

Size: 6" triangle
Color: Black lettering on azure blue background
Wording: WILDLIFE BUFFER BOUNDARY
PIERCE COUNTY PLANNING AND LAND SERVICES

POSTING REQUIREMENTS:

The signs shall face away from the critical area and must be placed on posts installed securely in the ground. Posts can be metal or wood. If wood posts are used, they must be at least 2" x 2" in size and be made of treated wood. Posts must extend a minimum of three feet above ground and be sunk at least two feet below ground.

Additional sign requirements, such as installation upon fencing instead of posts, may be applied at the discretion of the County Biologist.

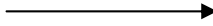
The following companies have templates for the buffer signs that are required by Pierce County regulations for development in areas containing wetlands, streams, and wildlife areas:

J.L. Darling Corp.
2614 Pacific Highway East
Tacoma, WA 98424
(253) 922-5000

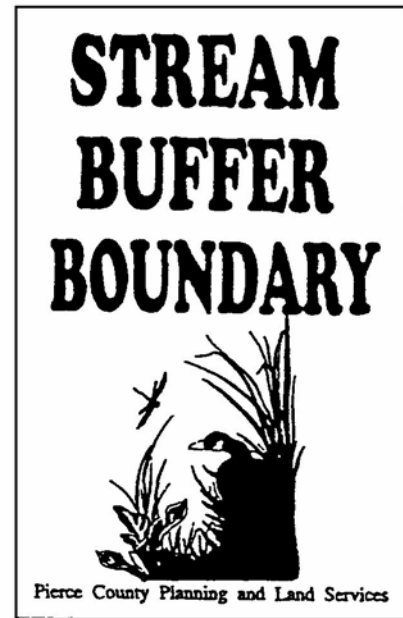
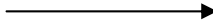
Tacoma Signwriters
3153 Soundview Drive West
Tacoma, WA 98466
(253) 565-7449

BUFFER BOUNDARY SIGNS

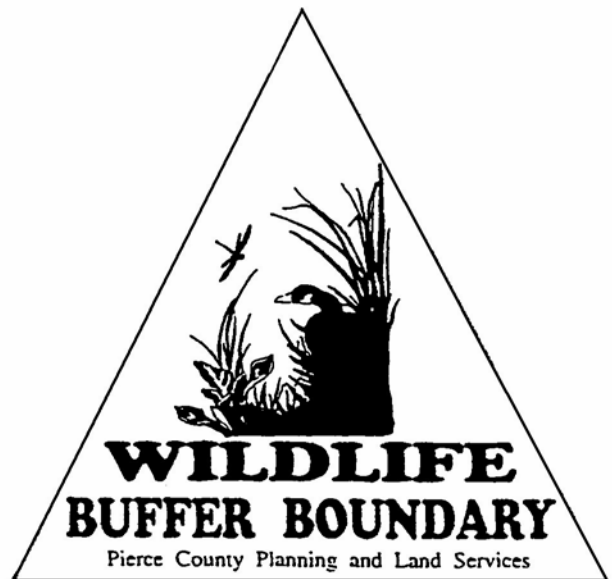
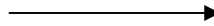
One sign every 30 to 50 feet.
Attach to a metal or wood fence
post.



One sign every 30 to 50 feet.
Attach to a metal or wood fence
post.



One sign every 30 to 50 feet.
Attach to a metal or wood fence
post.





RECORDING REQUIREMENTS

You may purchase a blank document at a stationery store or possibly obtain one from a local title insurance company. The document to be recorded must be **fully completed and signed by the grantor(s) in front of a notary**. We **do not** have a notary available to the public in our office, nor can our staff provide legal advice.

Below are the requirements pursuant to RCWs 65.04.45 and 65.04.47, effective January 1, 1997.

First page of each document must have a **3 inch top margin** and **1 inch side and bottom margins**. All succeeding pages must have a **1 inch margin on all sides** of each page.

Documents that must be recorded immediately and which do not meet **margin** and **font size** requirements may be recorded for an additional fee of **\$50.00** per RCW 65.04. The **cover sheet** which includes the non-standard recording request, must be completed and signed by the document preparer. This cover sheet must be attached to **each** non-complying document. Regular fees apply, **PLUS** the **\$50.00** additional fee, and will be due on each non-complying document. Non-standard documents are **NOT EXEMPT** from the requirement that they be fully legible.

The **first page** of each document must contain the following information:

1. Return address in upper left corner, within the top 3" margin
2. Document title
3. Name of grantor and grantee, with reference to page where additional names are located.
4. Abbreviated legal description, with reference to page where complete legal is located.

Abbreviated legal for this purpose means either lot, block and subdivision name/number OR section/township/range and quarter/quarter section.

5. Reference number(s) if referencing a previously recorded document.
6. Assessor's tax parcel number on a line **separate** from other text, if the document contains a legal description.

Per House Bill 1385, effective 7/24/05:

When any instrument, except those generated by governmental agencies, is presented to a county auditor or recording officer for recording, the document may not contain the following information: (a) A social security number; (b) a date of birth identified with a particular person; or (c) the maiden name of a person's parent so as to be identified with a particular person.

If required indexing information does not appear on the first page of the document, a cover sheet must be completed listing all of the necessary information. Fee to record will increase by \$1.00 if cover sheet is attached.

Page size may not exceed 8 1/2 by 14 inches.

Font size must be **8 point** or larger and information on **all pages** must be legible and reproducible, including map pages.

Paper and ink must be of weight and color capable of producing a legible image.

No attachments are permitted (i.e. stapled/taped notary acknowledgement, legals, etc)

Documents exempt from format requirements that may be recorded with a completed cover sheet include:

Documents signed prior to 1/1/1997, military separation documents, documents executed outside the U.S., certified copies of documents, any death certificate, documents formatted to meet court requirements, and documents where the original signer is deceased or otherwise incapacitated.

Failure to meet the requirements of this statute will result in document(s) being returned without being recorded. Please call (253) 798-7440 + 0 if you have any questions or email edrury@co.pierce.wa.us.

You may access the complete text of RCW's on the internet at www.leg.wa.gov.