



Shoreline Buffers

Kitsap County must include provisions for shoreline vegetation conservation buffers as an element of the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update process. State guidelines specifically require local governments to include provisions for vegetation conservation in order to:

- Protect and restore the ecological functions and ecosystem-wide processes performed by vegetation along the shorelines
- Protect human safety and property
- Increase the stability of slopes
- Reduce the need for shoreline armoring
- Improve the visual and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline
- Protect plant and animal species and their habitats
- Enhance shoreline uses.

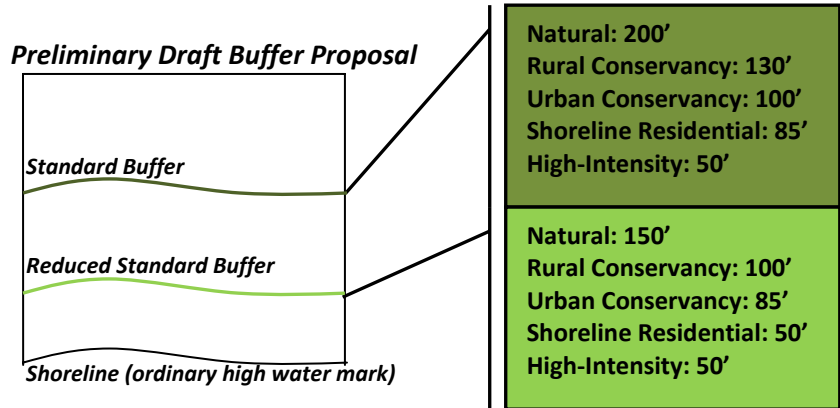
Kitsap County has had varying shoreline buffer standards in effect since 2000. While these standards are located in the Kitsap County Critical Areas Ordinance (“CAO”), applicable shoreline buffer standards must be integrated into the SMP during the update process.

Kitsap County is proposing a flexible approach to buffers in order to protect ecological functions while still accommodating appropriate use of the shoreline. Under this preliminary proposal, each Shoreline Environment Designation (SED) would have a *standard buffer* and a *reduced standard buffer*.

Standard Buffer- A starting buffer that provides optimum buffer functions for the SED. Development activity outside of this line would not require additional shoreline mitigation measures.

Reduced Standard Buffer- The standard buffer could be reduced through site-appropriate mitigation.

Constrained Lot Buffer- Development on constrained lots could occur *below* the reduced standard buffer line upon submittal of a site-specific shoreline mitigation plan, and would require an Administrative Buffer Reduction or Variance. Any such development must prevent loss of existing shoreline functions.



For more information, please visit www.kitsapshoreline.org