DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

What's new at Ecology?

Wetland Policy and Guidance Updates

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https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Wetlands/Regulations/Local-regulations
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Regulations
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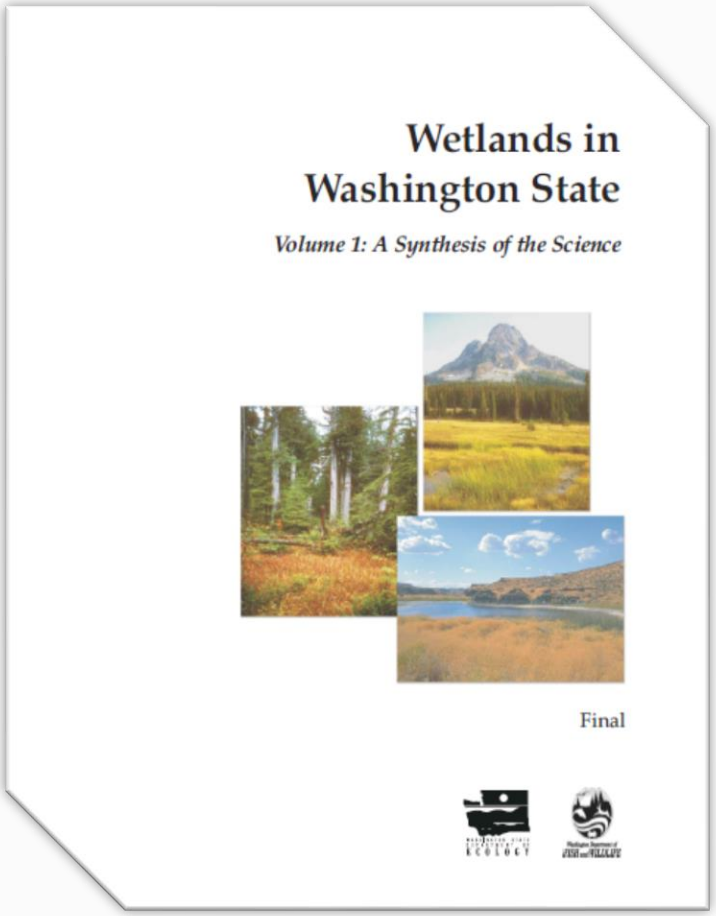
Federal regulations
Local wetland regulations: Growth Management Act technical assistance
Now Available: 2022 Wetland Guidance for Critical Areas Ordinance Updates
We assist local governments in their efforts to use best available science to adopt regulations that protect wetlands and their functions.
The state Growth Management Act (GMA) requires local governments to include best available science in developing policies and regulations protecting the functions and values of critical areas. All Washington counties and cities are required to review, evaluate, and, if necessary, revise their critical areas ordinances (CAO) according to a schedule established by the Washington State Legislature.
For more GMA information including updated resources, grants, and checklists, please refer to the Department of Commerce's Growth Management Services.
As part of our efforts to assist local governments, we review the wetland chapters of draft CAOs, meet with local planning staff and consultants, and provide wetland presentations to advisory groups, planning commissions, and local elected officials.
Wetland guidance for CAO updates
Planning under the Voluntary Stewardship Program
More local government resources
Our overall guidance, updated in 2022, is called Wetland Guidance for Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Updates: Western and Eastern Washington. It describes the important topics that should be addressed in the wetland section of a CAO.
Wetland Guidance for Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Updates: Western and Eastern

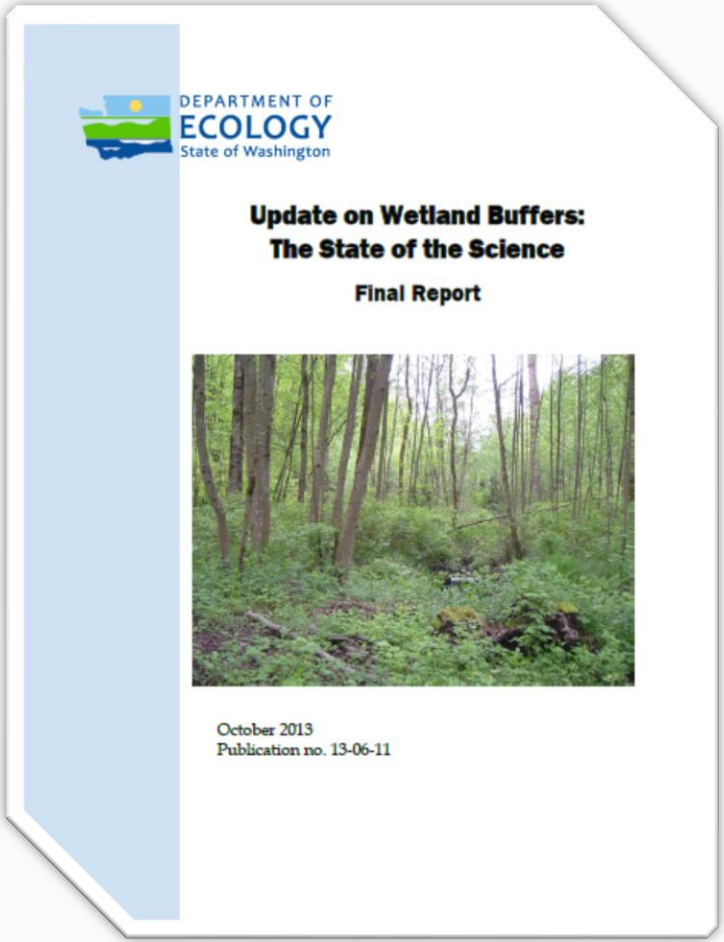
Topics

Ecology's wetland guidance for CAO updates

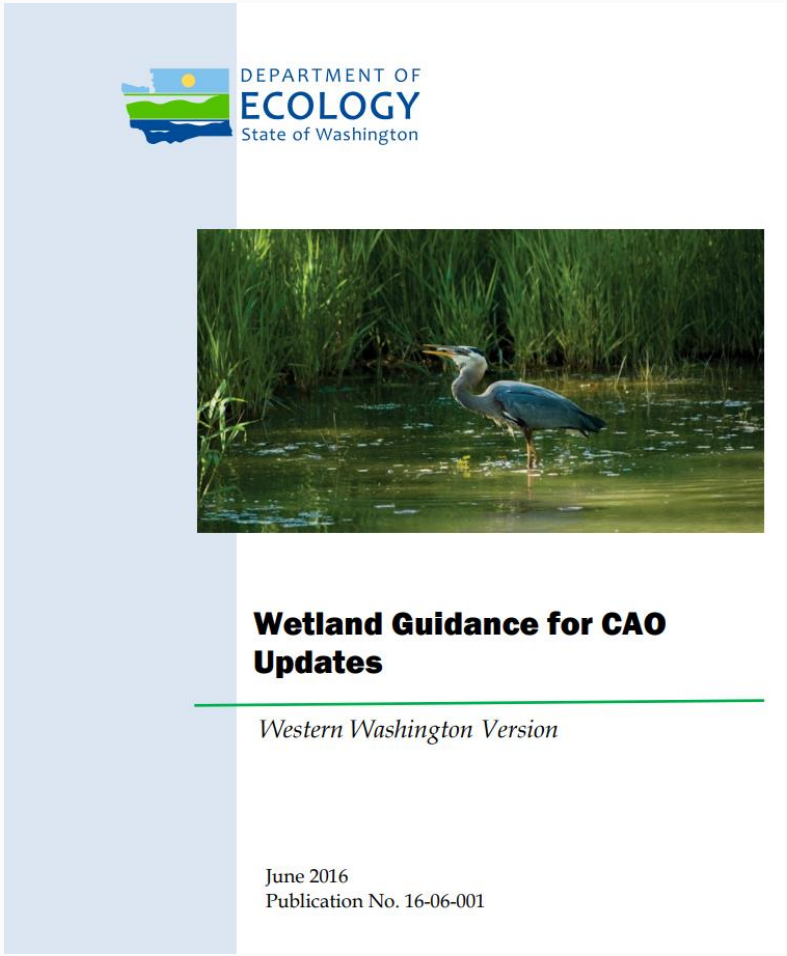
Joint Agency Mitigation Guidance

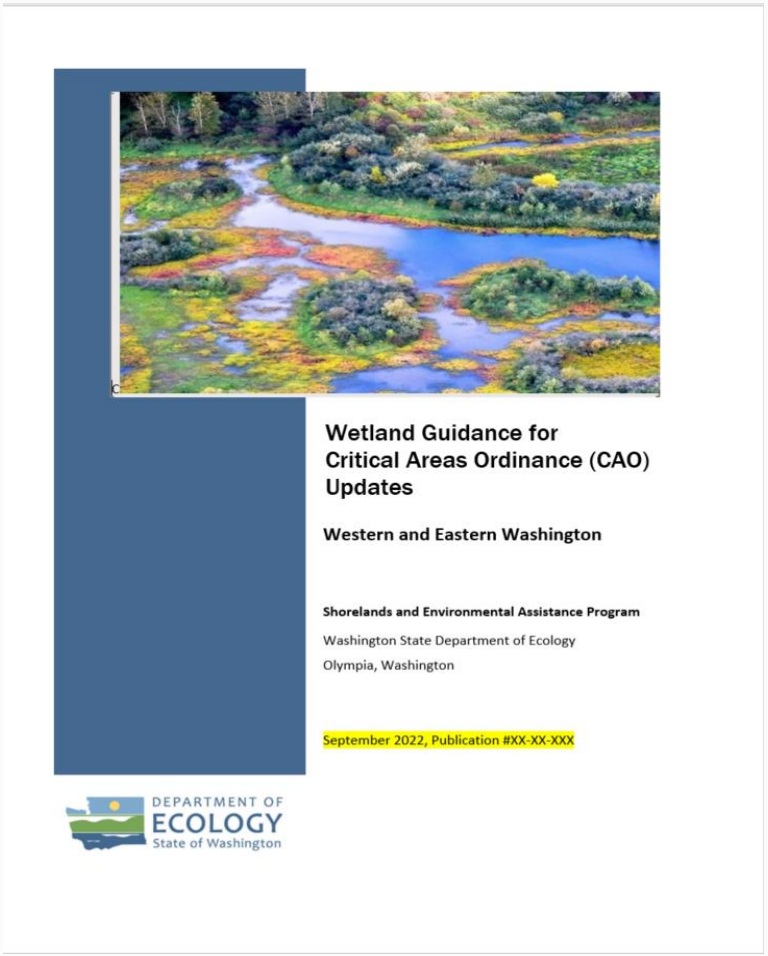
Ecology's Wetland BAS





CAO Guidance update





CAO Guidance update highlights

- **Buffer tables that incorporate shift in low habitat "bucket"***
- Updated and expanded examples of minimization measures
- Additional buffer approach options (Alt. 1 & 2 from Volume 2)

*BAS-based

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Table 1. Wetland buffer requirements, in feet, if Table 2 is implemented and corridor provided

Category of wetland	Habitat score 3-5 points (corridor not required)	Habitat score 6-7 points	Habitat score 8-9 points	Buffer width based on special characteristics
Category I or II: Based on rating of wetland functions (and not listed below)	75	110	225	NA
Category I: Bogs and Wetlands of High Conservation Value	NA	NA	225	190
Category I: Interdunal	NA	NA	225	NA
Category I: Forested	75	110	225	NA
Category I: Estuarine and wetlands in coastal lagoons	NA	NA	NA	150
Category II: Interdunal	NA	NA	NA	110
Category II: Estuarine and wetlands in coastal lagoons	NA	NA	NA	110
Category III: All types except interdunal	60	110	225	NA
Category III: Interdunal	NA	NA	NA	60
Category IV: All types	40	40	40	NA

Table 3. Buffer requirements, in feet, for applicants not providing a habitat corridor or implementing measures in Table 2

Category of wetland	Habitat score 3-5 points	Habitat score 6-7 points	Habitat score 8-9 points	Buffer width based on special characteristics
Category I & II: Based on rating of wetland functions (and not listed below)	100	150	300	NA
Category I: Bogs and Wetlands of High Conservation Value	NA	NA	300	250
Category I: Interdunal	NA	NA	300	NA
Category I: Forested	100	150	300	NA
Category I: Estuarine and wetlands in coastal lagoons	NA	NA	NA	200
Category II: Interdunal	NA	NA	NA	150
Category II: Estuarine and wetlands in coastal lagoons	NA	NA	NA	150
Category III: All types except interdunal	80	150	300	NA
Category III: Interdunal	NA	NA	NA	80
Category IV	NA	NA	NA	50

CAO Guidance update highlights

- Buffer tables that incorporate shift in low habitat “bucket”*
- **Updated and expanded examples of minimization measures**
- Additional buffer approach options (Alt. 1 & 2 from Volume 2)

*BAS-based

Minimization measures

We've added clarifying text and introduction to this part.

- Not a complete list
- Implement as many as possible
- Local staff works with applicant

Examples of Disturbance	Activities and Uses that Cause Disturbances	Examples of Measures to Minimize Impacts
Lights	• Parking lots • Commercial/Industrial • Residential • Recreation (e.g. athletic fields) • Agricultural buildings	• Direct lights away from wetland • Only use lighting where necessary for public safety and keep lights off when not needed • Use motion activated lights • Use full cut-off filters to cover light bulbs and direct light only where needed • Limit use of blue-white colored lights in favor of red-amber hues • Use lower intensity LED lighting • Dim light to the lowest acceptable intensity
Noise	• Commercial • Industrial • Recreation – (e.g. athletic fields, bleachers, etc.) • Residential • Agriculture	• Locate activity that generates noise away from wetland • Construct a fence to reduce noise impacts on adjacent wetland and buffer • Plant a strip of dense shrub vegetation adjacent to wetland buffer
Toxic runoff*	• Parking lots • Roads • Commercial/industrial • Residential areas • Application of agricultural pesticides • Landscaping • Agriculture	• Route all new, untreated runoff away from wetland while ensuring wetland is not dewatered • Establish covenants limiting use of pesticides within 150 ft. of wetland • Apply integrated pest management
Stormwater runoff	• Parking lots • Roads • Residential areas • Commercial/Industrial • Recreation • Landscaping/lawns • Other impermeable surfaces, compacted soil, etc.	• Retrofit stormwater detention and treatment for roads and existing adjacent development • Prevent channelized or sheet flow from lawns that directly enters the buffer • Infiltrate or treat, detain, and disperse new runoff from impervious surfaces and lawns

CAO Guidance update highlights

- Buffer tables that incorporate shift in low habitat "bucket"*
- Updated and expanded examples of minimization measures
- **Additional buffer approach options (Alt. 1 & 2 from Volume 2)**

*BAS-based

Alt 1 & 2 table

Category of Wetland	Widths of Buffers
IV	50 ft
III	150 ft
II	300 ft
I	300 ft

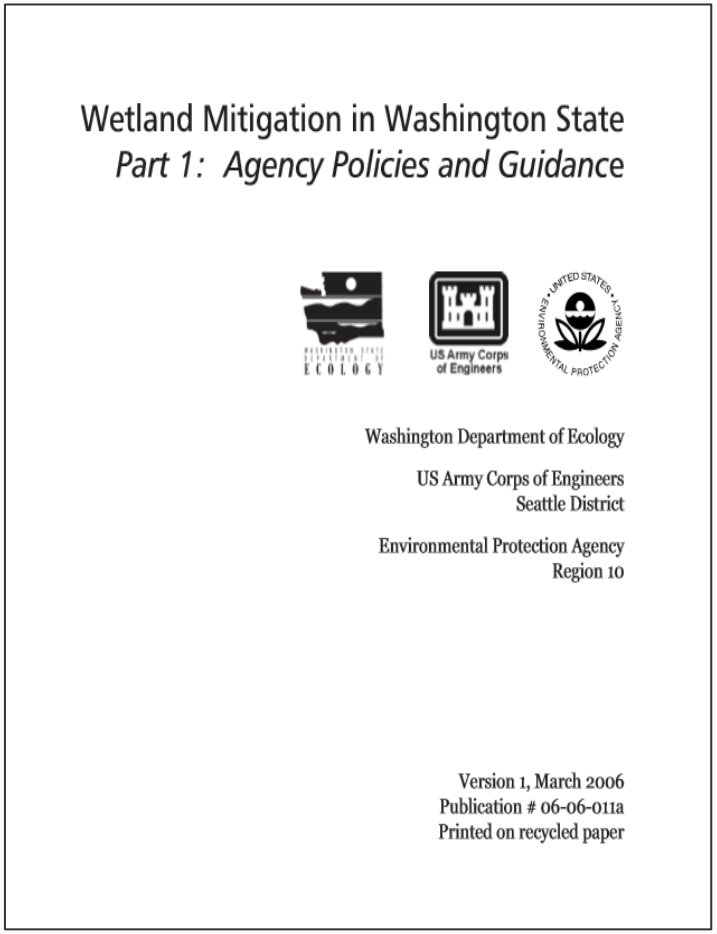
Category of Wetland	Land Use with Low Impact *	Land Use with Moderate Impact *	Land Use with High Impact*
IV	25 ft	40 ft	50 ft
III	75 ft	110 ft	150 ft
II	150 ft	225 ft	300 ft
I	150 ft	225 ft	300 ft
* See Table 8C-3 below for types of land uses that can result in low, moderate, and high impacts to wetlands.			

CAO Guidance update highlights (continued)

- New section on functionally disconnected buffers*
- Clarified corridor requirements and expanded applicability*
- **Incorporation of mitigation guidance (e.g. ratio tables)**
- Updated definitions and links

*BAS-based

Wetland Mitigation Guidance Update



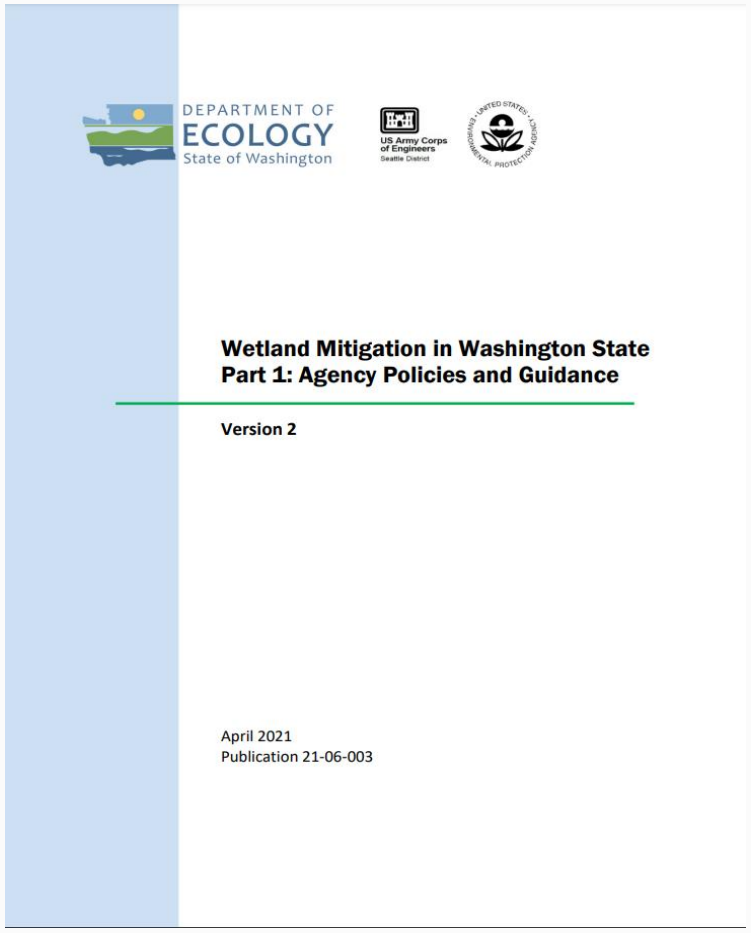
Wetland Mitigation in Washington State
Part 1: Agency Policies and Guidance

Washington Department of Ecology

US Army Corps of Engineers
Seattle District

Environmental Protection Agency
Region 10

Version 1, March 2006
Publication # 06-06-011a
Printed on recycled paper



Wetland Mitigation in Washington State
Part 1: Agency Policies and Guidance

Version 2

April 2021
Publication 21-06-003

Why update?

Mainly to Incorporate New Mitigation Rules/Guidance

2008: Federal mitigation rule
2009: State wetland mitigation banking rule
2010: Site selection guidance
2012: Advance mitigation guide
2012: Credit debit method
2014: Updated wetland rating system

Content

Ch 1: Introduction
Ch 2: A primer on the wetland regulatory process
Ch 3: Overview of how to prepare for the wetland regulatory process
Ch 4: Compensation approaches (permittee responsible, programmatic)
Ch 5: Compensation methods (creation, restoration, enhancement, preservation)
Ch 6: Location, amount, buffers, and aquatic resource tradeoffs
Ch 7: Other considerations (ESA, invasive species, climate change)
Ch 8: Stormwater and wetlands
Appendices: Contacts, Summary of Regulations

Highlighted changes

New Key Message:

Provide corridors and connectivity to other habitats.

- The concept of corridors and habitat-patch networks has been incorporated throughout the document.

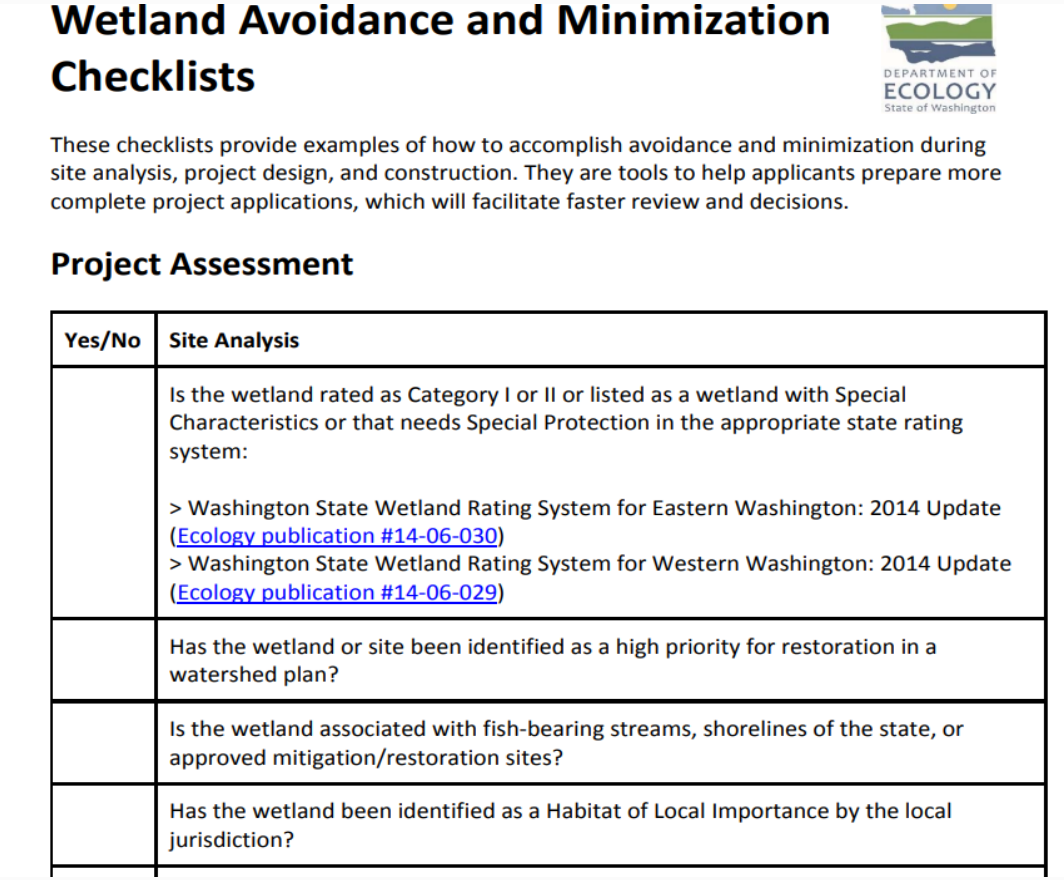
Highlighted changes

Renewed Emphasis on Avoidance and Minimization

- Avoid wetlands
- Minimize wetland impacts
- Then, after all practicable measures have been taken, compensate for remaining wetland impacts.
- Document rationale in mitigation plan.
- Refer to Avoidance & minimization checklist on Ecology's web page.

Avoidance & minimization checklists

- Use the avoidance and minimization checklist.
- Provides examples of how to accomplish avoidance and minimization during site analysis, project design, and construction.
- Avoidance & minimization checklist on Ecology's web page.



Wetland Avoidance and Minimization Checklists

These checklists provide examples of how to accomplish avoidance and minimization during site analysis, project design, and construction. They are tools to help applicants prepare more complete project applications, which will facilitate faster review and decisions.

Project Assessment

Yes/No	Site Analysis
	Is the wetland rated as Category I or II or listed as a wetland with Special Characteristics or that needs Special Protection in the appropriate state rating system: > Washington State Wetland Rating System for Eastern Washington: 2014 Update (Ecology publication #14-06-030) > Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western Washington: 2014 Update (Ecology publication #14-06-029)
	Has the wetland or site been identified as a high priority for restoration in a watershed plan?
	Is the wetland associated with fish-bearing streams, shorelines of the state, or approved mitigation/restoration sites?
	Has the wetland been identified as a Habitat of Local Importance by the local jurisdiction?

Highlighted changes

- Preference for using credit/debit method in certain cases (e.g. in lieu fee, preservation or enhancement only)

- Lowered (improved) ratios for preservation (now the same as enhancement).

- Expanded section on advance mitigation. Includes a description of 3 options for crediting and using advance mitigation.

Looking forward to 2023

- Training on mitigation guidance
- Outreach on revised CAO guidance

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAECY_160

Wetland contacts by subject & region

Have a wetland-related question? Find our regional wetland and subject-specific wetland contacts.

- Central region contacts +
- Eastern region contacts +
- Northwest region contacts +
- Southwest region contacts +
- WSDOT projects +
- Wetland contacts by subject +

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