

August 5, 2026
Thurston County Planning
Commission

CAO Update: Wetlands Gap Analysis

Claire Swearingen
Associate Planner

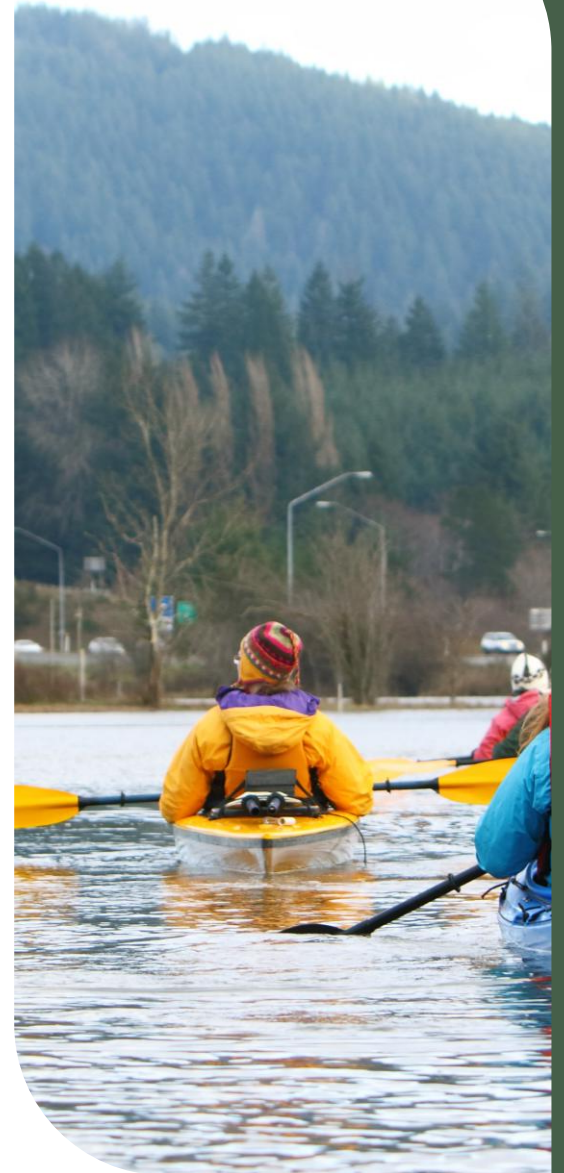


Presentation Outline: Wetlands Gap Analysis

- Key BAS points
- Gap analysis and recommended changes
- Discussion



1 Intro



Key BAS Points

- Wetlands provide key ecological functions that support water quality and quantity, habitat, and hazard mitigation
- Wetland buffers help protect the features that support wetland function, like vegetation and soil
- Wetlands are both susceptible to, and can help mitigate the effects of climate change on the landscape

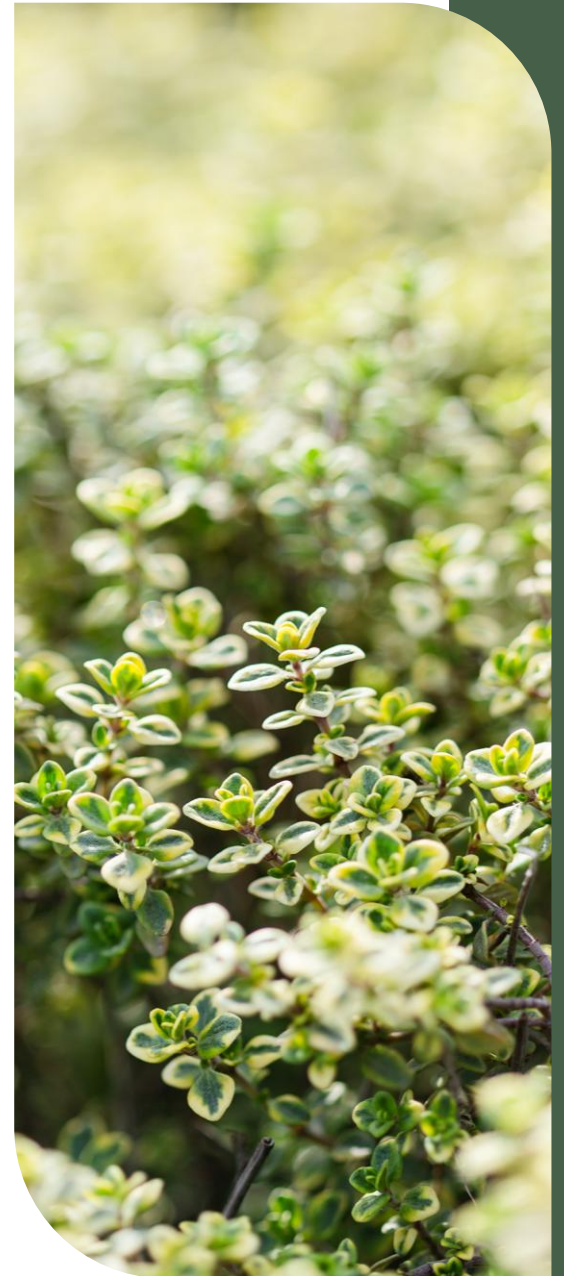


Other desired changes

- Transparency in screening tools and report requirements
- Flexibility where appropriate
- Clarity and navigability of code language



3 Other Changes



Gap analysis

Code Section	Title	Recommendations	Reason
24.30.013 (New)	Wetlands designated	Add designation criteria	Clarity and accessibility
24.30.020	Determination of boundaries	Add criteria for reports required for various site scenarios and buffer options	Clarity and transparency
24.30.023	Expedited review for single-family homes	Consider adding process and criteria to allow for some expedited review for SFRs	Implementation and flexibility



4 Gap Analysis

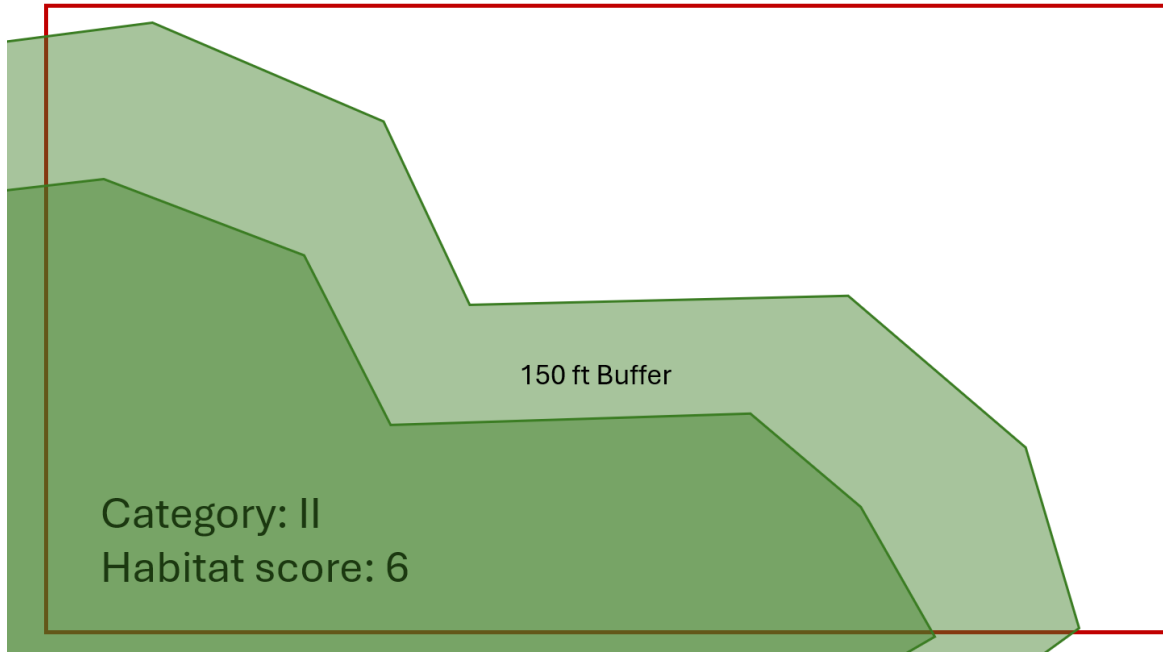
Gap analysis

Code Section	Title	Recommendations	Reason
24.30.045	Wetland buffers – Standard width	Replace buffer tables with the tables from Ecology's Option 1 and Option 3	State guidance, BAS, flexibility
24.30.050	Wetland buffers – Reduced width	Replace buffer tables and minimization standards with those from Ecology's Option 1	State guidance, BAS, flexibility
24.30.065	Wetland buffers – Tree protection	Create provisions that are appropriate for wetlands in prairie environments	BAS, feedback from conservation partners

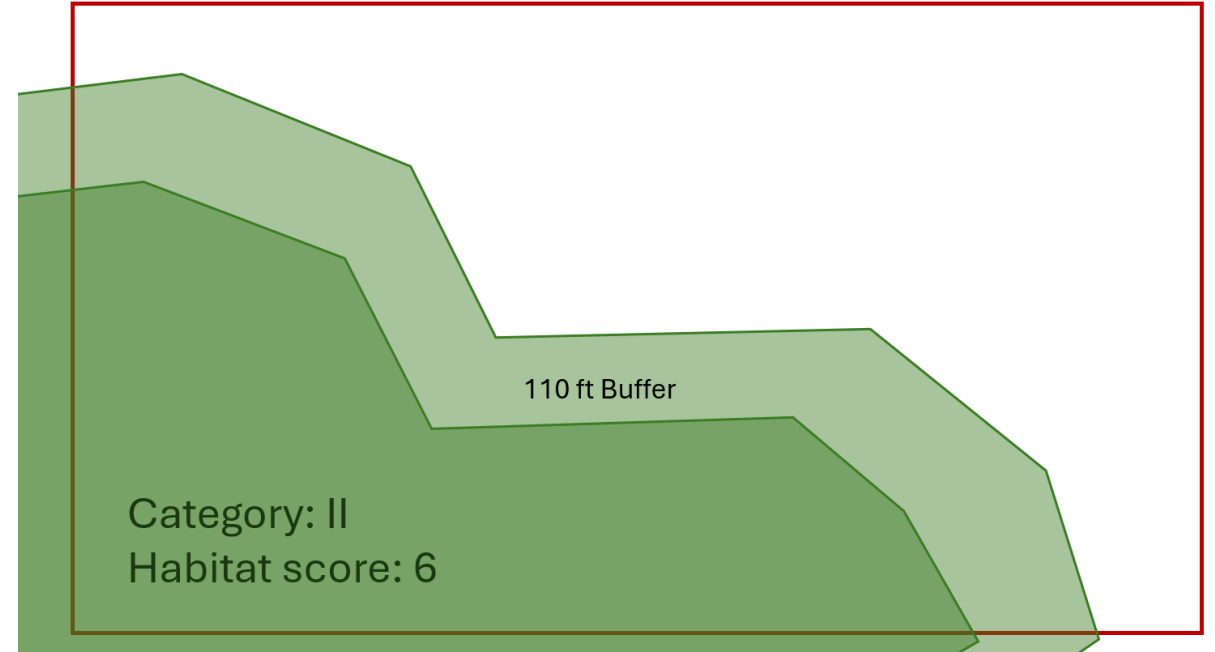


5 Gap Analysis

Ecology Option 1, No Minimization Measures

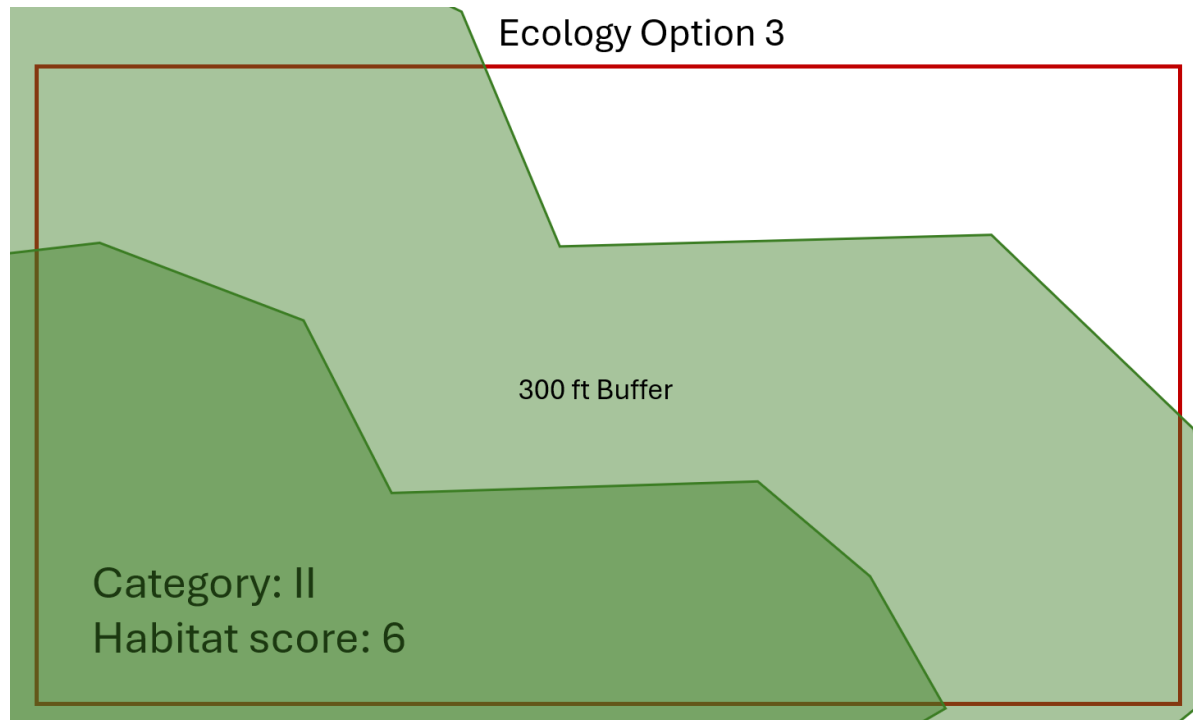


Ecology Option 1, With Minimization Measures



*This example is approximate, not to scale, and for illustrative purposes only

Ecology Option 3



Discussion

- Are any additional changes needed?
- Questions?



Meeting Date	Topic
10/1/25	Permitting/front counter demonstration
10/15/25	Draft schedule overview and prioritization discussion
11/5/25	Schedule finalization (as needed)
11/19/25	Overview of state guidance and BAS
12/3/25	Geologic Hazard Areas Concepts
12/17/25	No meeting- Power outage
1/7/26	Invite DNR to present new landslide mapping
1/21/26	Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas Concepts
2/4/26	Frequently Flooded Areas Concepts
2/18/26	No Meeting
3/4/26	Geo Hazards code presentation
3/18/26	FFA and CARA code presentation
4/1/26	Wetlands

Meeting Date	Topic
4/15/26	Wetland and Hydrologic FWHCAs
5/6/26	Dryland Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
5/20/26	Presentation on SMP and HCP integration
6/3/26	Invite DFW to present on FWHCAs
6/17/26	GHA Gap Analysis and Feedback Incorporation
7/1/26	CARA Gap Analysis and Feedback Incorporation
7/15/26	FFA Gap Analysis and Feedback Incorporation
8/5/26	Wetland Gap Analysis and Feedback Incorporation
8/19/26	FWHCA Gap Analysis and Feedback Incorporation
9/2/26	Permit Processes, FWHCAs and Wetlands code presentation
9/16/26	Revisit Permit Processes, FWHCAs and Wetlands
October-December 2026	Final review, workshops, public hearing, and recommendation



7 Schedule

“Permit Processes” will also include other general standards chapters like definitions, nonconforming structures.

Questions and Comments

Associate Planner Claire Swearingen

(360) 968-9989

claire.swearingen@co.thurston.wa.us

Find future project updates at ThurstonCriticalAreas.org.

