

STEWARDSHIP CHECKLIST

Promoting Agriculture and Protecting Critical Areas

Note: This is a conceptual draft laying out ideas for a checklist that can be fleshed out with County staff and the working group.

INTRODUCTION

This checklist is intended to encourage agricultural producers to undertake voluntary conservation and protection practices for common agricultural practices to protect and enhance critical areas.

What are critical areas?

Critical areas include 1) Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; 2) Wetlands, 3) frequently flooded areas, 4) geologically hazardous areas, and 5) critical aquifer recharge areas used for potable water. GMA requires their protection while managing growth and resource activities.

Why is protection of critical areas important?

Protecting critical areas helps to protect the public from threats to human safety and to protect public and private property from natural hazards; meet the goals of the GMA to protect the environment and enhance the state's quality of life; and preserve those environmentally sensitive areas that are valuable to the public and provide ecological function. Protecting critical areas also meets goals and objectives of local watershed plans.

How does this benefit me?

Implementing the conservation and protection practices suggested below offer benefits not only for the environment, but also for farmers. It gives farmers the means to conserve, improve, and increase efficient use of their natural resources. They may help support even higher yields and higher outputs over the long term. [Cite sources, e.g. USDA Economic Measures of Soil Conservation Benefits and others.]

Disclaimer: We understand that every operation is unique and requires a site-specific assessment of: 1) Whether there is a need to implement management practices, and 2) Whether recommended practices are in fact appropriate to a site. Not all the information needed to implement these measures is contained in this checklist.

STEP 1: ARE THERE CRITICAL AREAS ON YOUR PROPERTY?

Identify Critical Areas	
	YES
Have you <u>visually identified</u> critical areas on or adjacent to your property, such as ponds, lakes, streams, and wetlands?	
Have you used <u>online tools</u> to identify potential critical areas on or adjacent to your property, such as: [Use on-line maps at County website or link to VSP-specific maps] <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (e.g. streams, wildlife corridors, etc.)• Frequently Flooded Areas• Wetlands• Geologically hazardous areas• Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas	

STEP 2: WHAT ACTIVITY DO YOU WANT TO DO?

Clear vegetation, including riparian and wetland conversion

Associated effects:	Erosion, sedimentation, loss of riparian habitat
Associated VSP Objective:	Protect existing stream banks, floodplain and riparian vegetation, upland and wetland habitat (example from Wenatchee WRIA Plans)
Technical Resources:	Web resources: [web links related to this topic] Technical Assistance: Cascadia Conservation District [web link]; NRCS [web link]; WSU Extension [web link]; others...
	YES
Can you minimize the amount of vegetation you want to clear?	
How can you retain vegetation along water bodies (e.g. rivers, streams, lakes)?	

Build a fence

Associated effects:	Barriers to physical movement of wildlife
Associated VSP Objective:	Protecting wildlife species, particularly threatened and endangered species, and their associated habitat (in Entiat WRIA Plans see objective that promotes land practices that are beneficial for wildlife)
Technical Resources:	Web resources: [web links related to this topic] Technical Assistance: Cascadia Conservation District [web link]; NRCS [web link]; WSU Extension [web link]; others...
	YES
Can you carefully place the location and extent of the fence addressing maximum height, amount of permeability, or size of underpasses to help facilitate wildlife movement?	

Note: The rest of the checklist would be similar – common agricultural activities would be listed – and can be specific to issues in each watershed or type of agriculture (e.g. any unique activities for orchards versus vineyards) and any unique critical area concerns). The checklist can be designed to fit on a two–page format.