

DPD

Director's Rule 19-2006

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| Applicant: City of Seattle Department of Planning, & Development | Page 1 of 4 | Supersedes: 6-2003 |
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| Subject: Requirements for Wetland Professionals and Wetland Delineation Reports | Code and Section Reference: SMC 25.09.330.C (Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas) | |
| | Type of Rule: Procedural | |
| | Ordinance Authority: SMC 3.06.040 | |
| Index: Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas | Approved (signature on file) Diane M. Sugimura, Director, DPD | Date 8/4/06 |

PURPOSE

The City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has prepared this Director's Rule to offer guidance and clarify DPD's requirements for Wetland Delineation Reports prepared by wetland professionals hired by permit applicants to assess wetlands on a site.

AUTHORITY

Section 25.09.330.C, of the Seattle Municipal Code ("SMC") authorizes the Director of DPD to require technical reports detailing soils, geological, hydrological, drainage, plant ecology and botany, vegetation, and other pertinent site information. The reports are to be used to condition development to prevent potential harm and to protect the critical nature of the site, the adjacent properties, and the drainage basin.

RULE

When DPD, through either review of the Environmentally Critical Areas Wetland Map, an on-site visit by staff, or an on-site visit by a qualified wetlands professional, determines that a proposed project site contains wetland indicators (hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and/or ground that is consistently inundated or saturated with water) the permit applicant is required to submit a Wetland Delineation Report. The wetland professional hired to perform this work must comply with this Rule.

For purposes of this Rule, a wetland professional must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Certified as a Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS) by the Society of Wetland Scientist (SWS) Professional Certification Program (PWS must be current and in good standing with SWS) and meet the requirements of 3 below; OR
- 2) As determined by the Director:
 - a) Has earned a minimum of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in wetland science, biology, biological engineering, civil and environmental engineering, ecology, soils science, environmental science, environmental studies, geology, physical geography, hydrology, or any similar biological, physical, or natural resources science curriculum with specific or related course work in wetland ecology, botany, hydrology, ecology, or soil science from an accredited college or university, and
 - b) Has at least four (4) years of current professional experience in wetland delineation, functional assessment, and mitigation techniques in western Washington or equivalent experience, and
 - c) Meets the requirements of 3 below.
- 3) Experience in wetland delineation must be as a wetland professional and include the preparation of no less than ten (10) wetland delineations, which must be no more than 3 years old at the time of working within the City, delineating wetlands in accordance with the *Washington State Wetlands Identification and Delineation Manual* (Washington State Department of Ecology, March 1997 (Publication #96-94) or subsequent editions), referred to in the remainder of this Rule as the "*State Manual*." At least six (6) of the ten (10) delineations must be for nontidal wetlands. Provide DPD with a list of the company name, job title/job description, date and site location for each delineation.
- 4) In addition to the above criteria, the wetland professional must have successfully completed a course of instruction of a minimum of 32 hours in state and federal wetland delineation methods that includes the proper identification of vegetation, soils, and hydrology indicators as well as a field component.

A. Wetland Delineation - General Requirements

1. The location of wetland boundaries shall be determined through the performance of a field investigation by a wetland professional applying the methods specified by the *State Manual*.

2. A wetland delineation confirmed and approved by DPD shall be accepted by DPD for three (3) years from the date of the Wetland Delineation Report unless the Director determines that conditions have changed to warrant a new Report.
3. The approved wetland delineation boundary shall be surveyed and marked with permanent monuments, as described in DPD Director's Rule 3-94 or subsequent DPD Director's Rule. The surveyor shall provide the final wetland delineation mapping in either ArcView shapefile, .DXF file format or another file format as approved by the Director.

B. Minimum Components of Wetland Delineation Reports

In general, Wetland Delineation Reports submitted to DPD should include the following sections:

1. Title Page and Introduction

A title page and introduction that includes the project location, legal description and assessor's parcel number, the name of the property owner(s) (or designee) as shown on the application, the date of the field investigation, the date of Report preparation, and the name of the party preparing the Report.

2. Site Description

A site description that includes a description of the vegetation and topography of the site and the surrounding area and the existing land uses within 200 feet of the property's boundary lines. Include a description of any critical areas, streams, water bodies or floodplains located within 200 feet of the property lines. This information shall be shown on the site plan prepared by a professional land surveyor licensed by the State of Washington.

3. Background Resource Information

The wetland professional shall review all pertinent resource information, including at a minimum: the City of Seattle Wetland Environmentally Critical Areas map, and/or the National Wetland Inventory map and any available site specific soils information.

4. Methodology

The Wetland Delineation Report must contain a section that describes the methodology (i.e. Routine Determination, Comprehensive Determination, Atypical Situations, Problem Areas) used for the wetland delineation, as defined in the *State Manual*. Include completed Data Forms (sample forms are found in the *State Manual*).

5. Wetland Rating

The Wetland Delineation Report must contain a rating of the wetland(s) using the *Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western Washington* (Hruby, T. 2004) (Washington State Department of Ecology Publication #04-06-025 or subsequent editions).

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The Wetland Delineation Report must contain a description of the rationale for the determination of the wetland(s) boundary and buffer. Include a detailed description of the hydrology, soils, and vegetation found on-site. Note the size (e.g. acreage/square footage) of each wetland identified and indicate how the area was calculated. Support the discussion with details from the background information and field work presented and describe any unusual problems or difficulties encountered in the field that may have affected the wetland boundary delineation.

7. Attachments

The following must be attached to the Wetland Delineation Report:

- a. Vicinity map.
- b. A surveyed site plan showing the proposed project and all wetlands and other environmentally critical areas as defined in SMC 25.09.330.A.
- c. National Wetland Inventory Map or City of Seattle Environmental Critical Areas Wetland Map.
- d. USDA soils map for site (if available).
- e. Wetland determination data sheets and map showing location of sample plots.
- f. Wetland rating data sheet(s).
- g. Color photos of the wetland(s) and site are optional but are preferred.

C. Fieldwork Standards

1. The wetland professional shall use the *State Manual* as the source for identifying and delineating wetlands.
2. The wetland professional must examine the project site and surrounding vicinity within 100 feet of the property lines of the project site and identify the presence of wetlands and/or streams within this area.
3. The boundaries of each wetland shall be identified in the field with colored, lettered, and sequentially numbered flagging. Flagging should be attached to woody vegetation or survey stakes and placed at intervals no greater than 25 feet unless site conditions allow for wider spacing without compromising the mapping of the wetland.
4. Each sample point (data point, test pits) for which data are recorded shall be identified in the field with colored, lettered, and sequentially numbered flagging attached to woody vegetation or survey stakes.
5. All field sampling and data collection shall follow the parameters and methods identified in the *State Manual*.

D. Obtaining DPD Approval of Wetland Delineation and Report

1. The wetland professional preparing the Wetland Delineation Report shall submit a minimum of two copies of the Report to DPD.
2. DPD staff will conduct a site visit to verify the wetland delineation. To aid in field verification, wetland flagging shall be in place and easily visible.
3. Should DPD not agree with the wetland boundaries, DPD may require additional seasonal wetland hydrology data including the installation of groundwater monitoring tubes to determine the presence of wetland hydrology.