

## Urban Wildlife Habitat Category

“Urban wildlife habitat” means lands that provide habitat important to fish and other wildlife near a metropolitan area.<sup>115</sup> Urban wildlife habitat also provides an opportunity for human awareness of the importance of nature and the environmental benefits it provides.

### Urban Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Criteria Summary

Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Points
<b>Unscored</b>		
Project Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location maps</li> <li>• Project goals and objectives</li> </ul>	
<b>Scored by the Advisory Committee</b>		
1. Ecological and Biological Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project area composition</li> <li>• Species or communities</li> <li>• Pollinator habitat</li> <li>• Landscape characteristics</li> </ul>	40
2. Planning and Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan support</li> <li>• Public engagement</li> <li>• Threat to the site</li> <li>• Level of protection</li> </ul>	15
3. Community Benefits and Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public access, health, recreation, or cultural opportunities</li> <li>• Education and citizen science</li> <li>• Underserved communities</li> <li>• Multiple benefits</li> </ul>	35
4. Management and Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and stewardship plan</li> <li>• Restoration needs</li> <li>• Organizational capacity</li> </ul>	15
<b>Scored by RCO</b>		
5. Growth Management Act	Growth Management Act preference	0
6. Population of Urban Area	Population of the nearest urban area	5
7. Proximity to Urban Area	Proximity to the nearest urban area	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>115</b>

<sup>115</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010 (12)

## Detailed Scoring Criteria for the Urban Wildlife Habitat Category<sup>116</sup>

### **Project Introduction**

This is an opportunity to set the stage for the project. The following detailed criteria will provide an opportunity to describe the project in more depth; however, the intent here primarily is to help orient the evaluators.

- Locate the project on statewide, regional, and site maps to help orient the evaluators to the project area and its context within the landscape.
- Briefly provide a broad overview of the site and the project's goals and objectives (for example, acquisition goals, habitat or ecosystem type, and opportunities for connecting people with nature).

▲ Project introduction is not scored.

### **1. Ecological and Biological Characteristics**

- Describe the project area and the ecological makeup of the site(s). Include in the description the ecosystem structure and composition, and/or habitat types targeted for conservation; the number of acres; the plant and animal species present, and the significance of the site to the target species. Describe how the targeted species currently use the site.
- Describe any of the plant or animal species at the site that are considered threatened or endangered by any local, state, federal, or international species list. Describe the extent to which noxious weeds or other invasive species occur on site.
- How does the site support the feeding, nesting, and reproduction of pollinator species (bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, etc.)?<sup>117</sup>
- Define the service area or jurisdiction. How unique is this site within the service area or jurisdiction? Is this site part of a larger ownership or management unit?

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<sup>116</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2019-27

<sup>117</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(a)(xvii)

- What are the land uses surrounding the project area? How does this project connect, enhance, or provide ecosystem services to the surrounding landscape? Are there other protected lands (public or private) near this site that have complementary or compatible habitat characteristics for the target species (consider wide-ranging or migratory species)?

Applicants must complete and submit the Species or Communities with Special Status table in appendix A.

▲ Point Range: 0-40 points

## 2. Planning and Community Support

- How is this project supported by a current plan or a coordinated state or regional prioritization effort? Who are the plan's proponents and how does the plan address this specific project, habitat, or ecosystem type (local open space plan, comprehensive growth management plan, or shoreline master program; a watershed or salmon recovery plan; species management plan; climate adaptation plan; Puget Sound *Action Agenda*; etc.)?
- Describe the public engagement process used to identify this project or habitat as a priority. For example, how were local citizens, organizations, underserved communities, Tribal governments, or elected officials engaged, and how was their input incorporated into the project selection and design? Describe the support or partnership commitments secured for the project.
- What is the threat to the site's ecological integrity? Include in the discussion any anticipated ecological changes, the zoning and land-use potential of the site, and regulatory protections currently afforded to the site. Why are land-use regulations not sufficient to achieve the project goals?
- For acquisition projects, what level of protection (fee title acquisition vs. easement) will be placed on the property? Is this acquisition part of a phased project? Is a conservation easement sufficient to achieve the project purpose? If not, please explain why.

▲ Point Range: 0-15 points

### 3. Community Benefits and Public Access

- What public access, public health, recreational, educational, or cultural opportunities will this site provide? Please describe in detail how the public will experience the site and any plans for integrating environmental education and/or citizen science at this site. Also consider how people may access this site using public and/or active transportation (is there existing or planned multi-modal transportation that will bring people to or within a ten-minute walk of this site?)
- How does this project address the needs of communities that have been historically underserved by, or excluded from, opportunities to access nature? Please describe how their input was incorporated into the planning and design of this project, how they will safely access this site, how they will experience the stated benefits, and how they may be involved in the future of this project.
- How does this project provide other multiple benefits to the community, habitat, or surrounding ecological landscape? Include the following in the discussion:
  - Other resource uses or management practices that may help achieve additional conservation benefits (managed grazing for weed control, supporting a community forest, etc.)
  - How this project provides other ecosystem service benefits (protecting tree canopy in a dense urban area, aquifer recharge, flood attenuation, increased fire security, carbon storage, etc.)
- If development is being proposed at the site, please describe the development plan, site design, and implementation timeline. How does the proposed development contribute to the public needs (educational, health, recreation, cultural, etc.) described above and encourage an appreciation for the protected ecosystem? How will it be compatible with the surrounding natural habitat?

▲ Point Range: 0-35 points

#### 4. Management and Stewardship

- Describe the anticipated stewardship and management needs of the site, including those related to the species and ecosystems, public access, recreation, education, and cultural opportunities. To the degree possible, include the desired future condition of the site, an estimate of stewardship and management costs, and plans to maintain the ecological viability of the site in consideration of climate impacts, changes to surrounding land uses, and development pressure.
- Describe any restoration actions, if any are needed, to improve the habitat function or complexity on-site. How will the restoration work be funded? Who will complete the work? What is the proposed timeline to complete the restoration work?
- What is the applicant's organization's experience in managing a site with these or similar conservation values, habitat characteristics, and public access opportunities? What staff, volunteer, and financial resources are available to maintain the site? What is the source of funding for this ongoing work?

▲ Point Range: 0-15 points

#### 5. Growth Management Act. Applicant does not answer in evaluation session.

Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?

State law<sup>118</sup> requires that:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant<sup>119</sup> has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040.
- B. When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants that have adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the

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<sup>118</sup>Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

<sup>119</sup>County, city, or town applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agency, Tribal government, or nonprofit applicants.

requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it completes any of the following:

- Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law.
  - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan.
  - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than six months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- C. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

This question is scored by RCO staff based on information from the state Department of Commerce’s Growth Management Services. Scoring occurs after RCO’s technical completion deadline. If an agency’s comprehensive plan, development regulation, or amendment has been appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board, the agency cannot be penalized during the period of appeal.

▲ Point Range: -1 to 0 points

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|----------|---|
| -1 point | The applicant does <i>not</i> meet the countywide planning policy requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250. |
| 0 points | The applicant <i>meets</i> the countywide planning policy requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.         |
| 0 points | The applicant is a nonprofit organization or a state or federal agency.   |

**6. Population of Urban Area.** Applicant does not answer in evaluation session.

What is the population of the largest city, town, or urban area within five miles of the project?<sup>120</sup>

This question is scored by RCO staff based on a map provided by the applicant. To receive credit, depict on a map (1) the project boundary or the geographic envelop and (2) the nearest city, town, or urban area. Next, draw a straight line, measure, and record on the map the shortest distance in miles “as the crow flies” between one and two above. Include a scale and legend on the map for reference.

The score is based on the population of the largest city, town, or urban area within five miles of the project (using population estimates published by the Washington State Office of Financial Management).

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points

0 points	0-4,999
1 point	5,000-9,999
2 points	10,000-29,999
3 points	30,000-149,999
4 points	150,000-299,999
5 points	300,000-and above

**7. Proximity to Urban Area** (applicant does not answer).

Where is this project located with respect to urban growth areas, cities, towns, and urban area?<sup>121</sup>

This question is scored by RCO staff based on a map provided by the applicant for the previous question.

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<sup>120</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (5)(b)

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▲ Point Range: 0-5 points

0 points	5.01 miles or further
1 point	4.01-5 miles
2 points	3.01-4 miles
3 points	2.01-3 miles
4 points	1.01-2 miles
5 points	Within one mile or inside the Urban Growth Area/municipal boundary/urban area