



Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

What are they?

These are areas needed to conserve or maintain one or more plant or animal species. These species, or the environments that support multiple species, may be listed as having federal, state, or local importance.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCA) are located throughout the Pierce County and are likely to be found in shorelines and coasts, along rivers and streams, near wetlands, in and near lakes and ponds, on prairies, and in forests.

Why do we value them?



Plants and animals interact with their environments in unique and complex ways. Sometimes their function and value is not known until they are threatened, endangered, or lost.



Riparian zones are especially habitat-rich, dynamic systems that provide a transition and connection between water bodies and nearby lands.



Riparian zones help regulate the water cycle, provide shade, control run-off, support water quality, provides diverse conditions for spawning and breeding, and more.





How do we protect them?

- Stream classification and typing consistent with best available science.
- Provide larger buffers for riparian zones, filled with native vegetation.
- Manage FWHCAs to retain trees and vegetation, emphasizing native vegetation and controlling invasive species.
- Manage land uses at the edge of FWHCAs and their buffers by retaining native vegetation, hedgerows, and other natural barriers.
- Manage impervious surface and stormwater runoff near FWHCAs.
- Avoid and minimize habitat fragmentation, particularly for larger and more intact habitat areas. Provide vegetated corridors between habitat areas.
- Avoid planning habitat areas near roadways.
- Encourage environmental stewardship and management practices.

What changes are needed?

- De-list bald eagle as an endangered species
- Development of a County-wide Habitat Conservation Plan and define habitat for the endangered Mazama pocket gopher
- Update Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area definition to align with standard guidance
- For complete list: PierceCountyWa.gov/CriticalAreas

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Pierce County