

RCW 90.74.020 Mitigation plans. (1) Project proponents may use a mitigation plan to propose compensatory mitigation within a watershed. A mitigation plan shall:

(a) Contain provisions that guarantee the long-term viability of the created, restored, enhanced, or preserved habitat, including assurances for protecting any essential biological functions and values defined in the mitigation plan;

(b) Contain provisions for long-term monitoring of any created, restored, or enhanced mitigation site; and

(c) Be consistent with the local comprehensive land use plan and any other applicable planning process in effect for the development area, such as an adopted subbasin or watershed plan.

(2) (a) The departments of ecology and fish and wildlife may not limit the scope of options in a mitigation plan to areas on or near the project site, or to habitat types of the same type as contained on the project site. The departments of ecology and fish and wildlife shall fully review and give due consideration to compensatory mitigation proposals that improve the overall biological functions and values of the watershed or bay and accommodate the mitigation needs of the infrastructure development or noninfrastructure development, including proposals or portions of proposals that are explored or developed in RCW 90.74.040.

(b) The departments of ecology and fish and wildlife are not required to grant approval to a mitigation plan that the departments find does not provide equal or better biological functions and values within the watershed or bay.

(3) When making a permit or other regulatory decision under the guidance of this chapter, the departments of ecology and fish and wildlife shall consider whether the mitigation plan provides equal or better biological functions and values, compared to the existing conditions, for the target resources or species identified in the mitigation plan. This consideration shall be based upon the following factors:

(a) The relative value of the mitigation for the target resources, in terms of the quality and quantity of biological functions and values provided;

(b) The compatibility of the proposal with the intent of broader resource management and habitat management objectives and plans, such as existing resource management plans, watershed plans, critical areas ordinances, the forestry riparian easement program, the riparian open space program, the family forest fish passage program, and shoreline master programs;

(c) The ability of the mitigation to address scarce functions or values within a watershed;

(d) The benefits of the proposal to broader watershed landscape, including the benefits of connecting various habitat units or providing population-limiting habitats or functions for target species;

(e) The benefits of early implementation of habitat mitigation for projects that provide compensatory mitigation in advance of the project's planned impacts; and

(f) The significance of any negative impacts to nontarget species or resources.

(4) A mitigation plan may be approved through a memorandum of agreement between the project proponent and either the department of ecology or the department of fish and wildlife, or both. [2012 c 62 s 4; 1997 c 424 s 3.]