

WAC 173-700-303 Site selection. (1) Banks must be sited, planned, and designed to be self-sustaining over time. The department shall carefully consider ecological suitability, ecological sustainability, and land use compatibility when determining if a site is an appropriate location for a bank.

(a) The department shall consider the following factors when determining if a proposed bank site is ecologically suitable for providing the desired aquatic resource functions, to the extent practicable:

(i) Whether the proposed location and design are consistent with watershed-based restoration priorities;

(ii) Whether the proposed location and design allow for the protection and restoration of ecological processes within the basin or the watershed;

(iii) Whether the proposed location and design protect or enhance wetland functions that can be sustained over time;

(iv) Whether the proposed location will possess the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics to support a sustainable wetland ecosystem;

(v) Whether the size and location of the bank are appropriate relative to the ecological features found at the site, such as sources of water;

(vi) Whether the proposed location has a high potential to connect or complement existing wetlands;

(vii) Whether the process of establishing the bank at the site will protect, enhance, or negatively affect ecologically significant aquatic or upland resources or habitat for threatened, endangered, or candidate species; and

(viii) The types of unavoidable impacts that are anticipated to use bank credits for mitigation.

(b) The department shall consider the following factors when determining if a proposed bank site is ecologically sustainable:

(i) Whether the bank site can be protected over time from direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts based on development trends and anticipated land use changes;

(ii) Whether the sponsor has obtained water rights for the site, if necessary; and

(iii) Other factors deemed appropriate.

(c) The department shall consider various factors when determining if a proposed bank site is compatible with the surrounding land. These factors shall include, but are not limited to:

(i) Whether the proposed location contains cultural resources;

(ii) Whether the proposed location and bank objectives are compatible with surrounding land uses located both up and down gradient;

(iii) Whether the proposed location contributes to the improvement of identified management problems within the drainage basin or watershed (e.g., sedimentation, water quality degradation, or flood control); and

(iv) What the historical land uses were at the proposed location (e.g., agricultural, chemical, industrial, and archaeological).

(2) Compatibility of banks and agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance (ALLCS).

(a) The department discourages the location of banks on prime farmland soils designated as ALLCS due to the important resource and societal values of those resource lands.

(b) If a bank is proposed to be located within an area designated as ALLCS:

(i) Impacts to prime farmland soils both on-site and off-site shall be avoided to the maximum extent possible;

(ii) The bank shall be located on nonprime farmland soils to the greatest extent possible;

(iii) The bank must be designed and constructed to not adversely affect adjacent and nearby agricultural operations. This includes, but is not limited to: Adverse effects on water flows to neighboring farms, and minimizing shading effects on adjacent farms; and

(iv) The bank should be designed to support local and regional environmental priorities found in, but not limited to, watershed management plans, watershed characterizations, wetland mapping or inventories, stormwater management plans, shoreline master programs, salmon recovery plans and comprehensive land use plans.

(c) The department shall consult with the local conservation district and the conservation commission to determine whether the bank siting conflicts with local or statewide goals for agricultural land preservation.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 90.84 RCW. WSR 09-19-013 (Order 04-13), § 173-700-303, filed 9/3/09, effective 10/4/09.]