

# City of Snoqualmie

## Critical Areas Code (SMC 19.12) 2024 Updates

*October 21, 2024*



# Best Available Science Review and City Code Updates (SMC 19.12 – Critical Areas)

- Critical Areas Definitions (SMC 19.020)
- Critical Areas Review Process (SMC 19.12.070)
- General Provisions (SMC 19.12.090)
- Frequently Flooded Areas (SMC 19.12.150) and Flood Hazard Regulations (SMC 15.12)
- Streams (SMC 19.21.160)
- Wetlands (SMC 19.12.170)
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (SMC 19.12.190)
- Administrative updates

# Best Available Science Review and City Code Updates (SMC 19.12 – Critical Areas)

## Critical areas definitions (SMC 19.020) – Additions

- “Ordinary high water mark” means the point on the sides of streams or lakes which is historically or normally at water’s edge, as identified by a visible change in vegetation and/or soil. The ordinary high water mark should be determined using the most current federal and state methodologies.
- “Hazard tree” is defined as a threat to life, property, or public safety.
- “Sensitive species” means any wildlife species native to the state of Washington that is vulnerable or declining and is likely to become endangered or threatened in a significant portion of its range within the state without cooperative management or removal of threats, as currently listed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

# Best Available Science Review and City Code Updates (SMC 19.12 – Critical Areas)

## Critical areas definitions (SMC 19.020) – Additions

- “Waters of the state” means lakes, rivers, ponds, streams, inland waters, underground waters, salt waters, and all other surface waters and watercourses within the jurisdiction of the state of Washington.
- “Riparian management zone” means an area that has the potential to provide full riparian functions, synonymous with stream buffer. Primary functions of riparian management zones include shading, bank stability, nutrient input, wood recruitment, and pollution control.

# Best Available Science Review and City Code Updates (SMC 19.12 – Critical Areas)

## Critical areas definitions (SMC 19.020) – Updates

- “Wetlands” – aligned with current RCW 36.70A(030(48)
- “Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas” – added **Riparian Management Zones** to locally important habitats/species, federal and state sensitive wildlife species, waters of the State; maintains exemptions for artificial features (e.g., irrigation, ditches)
- “Critical area” – includes critical areas and associated buffers
- “Buffer” – synonymous with **Riparian Management Zones**

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# Best Available Science Review and City Code Updates (SMC 19.12 – Critical Areas)

## Critical Areas Review Process (SMC 19.12.070)

- Monitoring **required** when mitigation is required

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# Best Available Science Review and City Code Updates (SMC 19.12 – Critical Areas)

- General Provisions (SMC 19.12.090)
  - Whenever mitigation is required, the applicant shall prepare and submit a mitigation plan using a watershed approach for city review and approval.

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# Frequently Flooded Areas (SMC 19.12.150) and Flood Hazard Regulations (SMC 15.12)

- Frequently flooded areas = FEMA's FIRM maps
- WDOE encouraging local governments to go beyond FEMA minimum requirements (40% of NFIP claims from 2017-19 for properties outside of FEMA mapped flood zones)
- E.g., King County extends no-rise requirement to flood fringe (FEMA only requires no-rise in floodway)
- Hydraulic study by KC showed a 1.4' drop in the Snoqualmie River's BFE from downstream projects (e.g., lowering falls)
- Safety/Climate factor already built into city mapping and regulations
- Considering additional protections to lower flood insurance rates for citizens

# Best Available Science Review and City Code Updates (SMC 19.12 – Critical Areas)

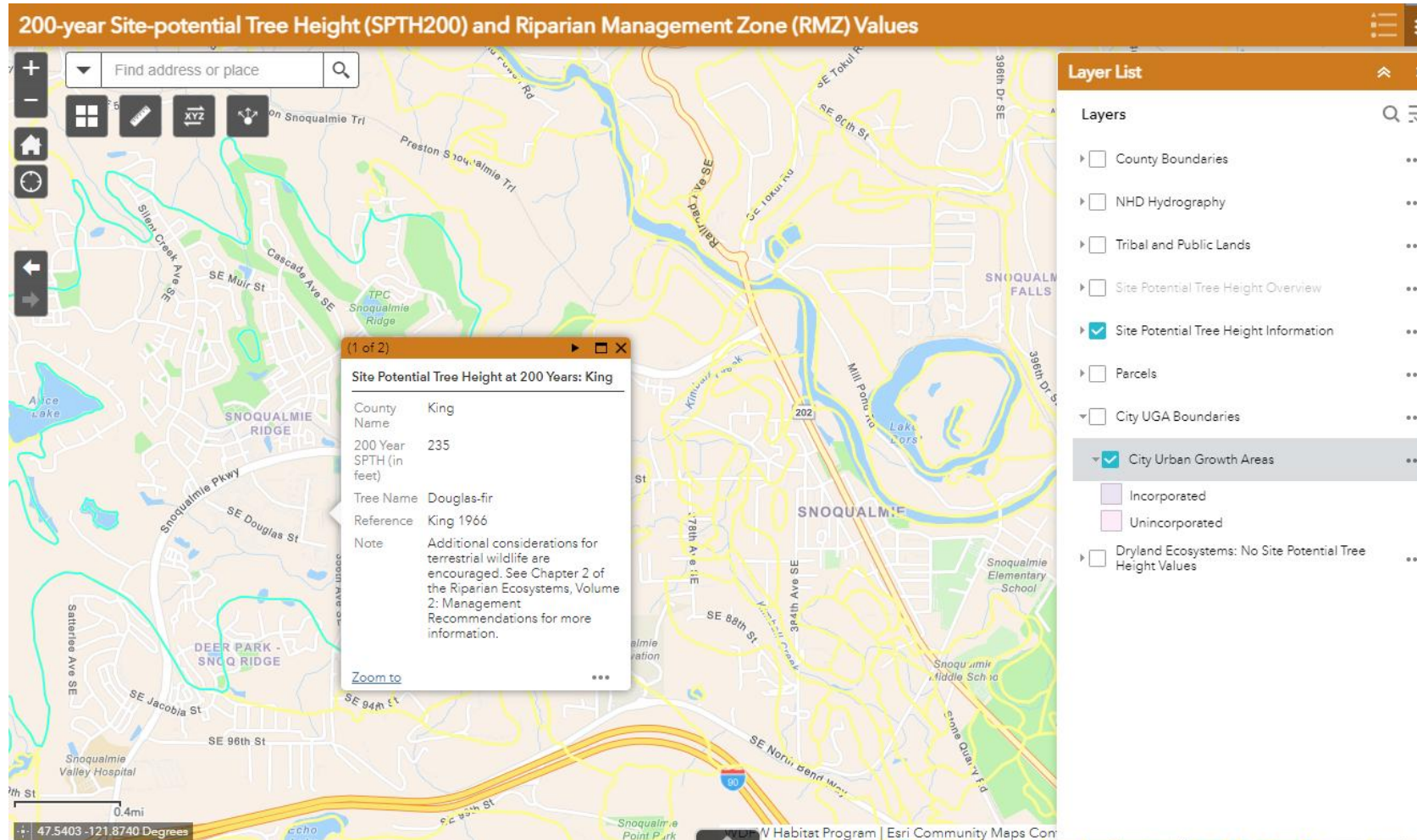
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# Streams (SMC 19.21.160)

*BAS: Volume 1: Science Synthesis and Management Implications* (Quinn et al. 2020)  
and *Volume 2: Management Recommendations* (Rentz et al. 2020)

- Riparian Management Zones (RMZs)
- Site Potential Tree Height (SPTH) and Desired Future Condition (DFC)
- Climax tree height (+200 years) and soil types
- 100' to 240' RMZs

# Streams (SMC 19.21.160)



# Streams (SMC 19.21.160)

Current Code (19.12.160-1)		2024 WDFW BAS	
Stream Classification	Buffer Width (ft)	Stream Classification	RMZ Width (ft)
Class 1 streams and Class 2 streams with anadromous salmonids	100	Class 1 (Type S)	See Shoreline Regulations (SMC 19.08)
Class 2	75	Class 2 (Type F)	200
Class 3	50	Class 3 (Type Np)	100
Class 4	25	Class 4 (Type Ns)	100
Snoqualmie River SF and RB within Natural Shoreline Env.	200	-	-
Snoqualmie River within Urban Riverfront Env.	25	-	-

# Streams (SMC 19.21.160)

- Replaced “Buffers” with Riparian Management Zones
- Stream crossings designed in accordance with WDFW’s Water Crossing Design Guidelines (2013), as updated. New crossings shall be evaluated under future climate change scenarios for 2040 and 2080, or similar, as required by state and federal agencies.



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# Wetlands (SMC 19.12.170)

- Allowed Uses, Exemptions, and Exceptions maintained (e.g., <1k SF exemption)
- Impacts and Mitigation Ratios: Direct and Indirect
  - 2021 Interagency Manual: Wetland Mitigation in WA State, Part 1: Agency Policies and Guidance, Version 2 – Ecology, USACE, EPA
- Wetland Buffers: widths align with Ecology's Wetland Guidance for Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Updates (2022)
  - Functionally disconnected buffers
  - Widths based on land use intensity, wetland class, and habitat functions (min. 40')

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# Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (SMC 19.12.190)

## Additions

- All waters of the state (.e., wetlands, streams)
- Areas with primary association for state and federal listed wildlife species, state sensitive species, and Priority Habitat Species as designated by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as Habitats of Local Importance.



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