Critical Area Determination

Critical Area Determination (CAD) is a process to determine if critical areas are present on a property. Any person seeking to determine whether a proposed activity or an area is subject to the Thurston County Critical Area Ordinance (CAO), Title 24, may request a CAD.

Staff from the Resource Stewardship Department will conduct a site visit and evaluate the property for any impacts and compliance with the CAO. Special environmental reports may be requested to assist in the evaluation process. This may include full delineation and analysis of the critical area by a qualified professional at the applicant’s expense.

A determination letter will be issued after review of the critical area is complete. The letter will identify the critical area and outline the provisions of the CAO associated with the critical area, and may include mitigating conditions.

Note: Critical areas affecting single-family building sites may be evaluated through the underlying permit application when a building permit or conditional site approval is submitted. A Critical Area Review Permit may be required through these processes.

How Do I Apply?
Submit a completed application package to the Permit Assistance Center with the applicable fee. Complete package requirements are outlined on the application form.

Review Process and Timing
A CAD is reviewed under the Type I procedure. This means that staff is the review authority and the review time can be up to 58 days. The review time may take longer if a request for additional information is necessary. Public notification is not required. Workload may affect the review time.

Staff from Resource Stewardship will act as case manager. This involves coordinating the review with Environmental Health, Public Works, and the Assessor.

Appeals
All decisions may be appealed. An appeal form and associated appeal fee must be submitted within 14 days from the date of the decision. All appeal forms are submitted to the Permit Assistance Center.

Expiration
The CAD determination is valid for one year from the date of issuance. No extensions are permitted.

I Still Have Questions…
The information in this bulletin is a general guideline of the procedures and rules. You should not rely on this bulletin to identify the specific requirements for a project. For additional information, speak with a staff member at the Permit Assistance Center. Contact information is listed below. You may also review all Thurston County Codes online on the County website referenced at the bottom of this page.