Chapter 24.60

CRITICAL AREA SIGNS AND FENCING

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24.60.010 Critical area signs and fencing – Generally.
To further the purposes and requirements of this title for protecting critical areas, signs and fencing may be necessary to mark the boundaries of certain designated critical areas. The purpose of critical areas signage and fencing is to note the location of the designated critical area and inform the general public and private land owners about wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and special hazards designated as critical areas in this title.

24.60.020 Critical area signs and fencing – Allowed signage
Within wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and their associated buffers, signs shall be limited to interpretive signage approved by the approval authority, street signs within rights-of-way, critical area identification signs, and survey markers and monuments. (Also see the signage requirements for the applicable zoning district).

24.60.030 Critical area signs and fencing – Required signage.
Within wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, landslide hazard areas, marine bluffs and their associated buffers, signs are required as a condition of any permit or authorization issued pursuant to this chapter. Signs and their locations shall be inspected by the director, or designee, prior to commencement of any permitted activity. The applicant shall be required to install permanent signs along the boundary of a critical area tract or along the edge of the buffer. Permanent signs shall consist of an enamel-coated metal face attached to a metal post or another non-treated material of equal durability. The signs shall be worded as follows or with alternative language approved by the approval authority.

(Critical Area)
Do Not Disturb
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These signs shall be located at the point where lot lines intersect with the buffer, at corners where the buffer makes a change of direction, and not less than every three hundred feet. The approval authority may allow the signage to be at larger intervals when the sign would be visible from an adjacent sign and installation of a sign at a shorter distance would interfere with reasonable use of the property. The property owner shall maintain the signs.
24.60.040 Critical area signs and fencing – Fencing – Wetlands and geologic hazard areas.

A. Design. Fences shall be designed and placed to minimize impacts to wetlands, geologic hazard areas, wildlife habitat, and wildlife travel. The fence type and height shall be subject to county approval unless superseded by Federal or State approvals.

B. Fencing the perimeter of the buffer. Fences are permitted along the outer boundary of the wetland buffer and geologic hazard area buffer.

C. Fencing within the buffer. Fencing shall not encroach into wetlands, marine hazard areas or buffers except along the perimeter of lawful development within the wetland or buffer. The approval authority may allow fencing along property lines within the wetland, marine bluff hazard areas, and associated buffers only if it would protect wetland and marine bluff functions as determined through review of a Critical Area Permit.

D. Required fencing/thorny shrubs. The approval authority shall require permanent fencing to be placed along the outer boundary of the critical area buffer if it is determined that a proposed use adjoining the buffer poses a threat to the critical area and buffer functions, or there is a public safety issue (e.g., when livestock or people would otherwise enter and damage the area or disturb sensitive wildlife or areas or there is an unstable geologic area). If the approval authority determines that it would better protect wetland and buffer functions, planting of densely spaced, noninvasive, thorny shrubs to restrict access to the buffer may be required, rather than fencing.

24.60.050 Critical area signs and fencing – Fencing – Habitat area or buffer.

A. Fencing the perimeter of the habitat area/buffer. Fences are permitted along the outer boundary of the important habitat area, unless a buffer is required. In that case, the fence may only be located along the perimeter of the buffer, except as provided for by subsection (B) below.

B. Fencing within the buffer. Fencing may encroach into the important habitat area along the perimeter of lawful development within the important habitat area and buffer. The approval authority may allow fencing along property lines within the important habitat areas only if it would protect habitat functions.

C. Design. Fences shall be designed and placed to minimize impacts to wildlife habitat, wildlife, and wildlife travel. The fence type and height shall be subject to county approval unless superseded by Federal or State approvals. Signs identifying the important habitat area shall be attached to such fencing consistent with this chapter.

D. Required fencing/thorny shrubs. The approval authority shall require permanent fencing to be placed along the outer boundary of the important habitat or the boundary of legally established development within the important habitat area if s/he determines that a proposed use adjoining the important habitat area poses a threat to the important habitat area (e.g., when livestock or people would otherwise enter and damage the habitat area or
disturb sensitive wildlife). If the approval authority determines that it would better protect habitat functions, s/he may require planting of densely spaced, noninvasive, thorny shrubs to restrict access to the habitat/buffer, rather than fencing.

Figure 24.60-1 Buffer Sign Example

*Wetland Buffer Boundary*
*DO NOT DISTURB*

Contact Thurston County at 786-5490 Regarding Uses and Restrictions