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Subject: Additional Comment on Birch Bay habitat mitigation buffers

Birch Bay Habitat Mitigation Buffers

An important point regarding off-site habitat mitigation is that it will not be successful unless the compensatory mitigation is created before there are impacts to HCA and wetland buffers that destroy fish and wildlife habitat.

I have seen property owners developing land before compensatory mitigation is created. However, once habitat is destroyed, the fish and wildlife have no place to go and they can not always survive until compensatory habitat is created elsewhere. Even when compensatory mitigation is created, it may sometimes consist of new plantings. In this case, it may take months or years before it can serve its intended function.

Please ensure that any off-site compensatory mitigation is fully established before development is permitted to damage existing habitat. This is the only way to ensure no net loss in ecological function.

Thank you
Wendy Harris