

# Birch Bay Habitat Impact Evaluation Data Form

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## *Instructions for Completing the Wildlife Habitat Field Data Form*

The field data form consists of five sections: general information, vegetation, important habitat features, landscape context, and habitat degradation.

### General Information

In this section provide the project name and location, date or dates of field data collection, date the form was completed, and the person completing the form. The **assessment area** is the area for which payment will be made to the Habitat Mitigation Fund. Typically this is the difference between a reduced buffer per WCC 16.16.630 or .740 and buffer allowed per WCC 16.16.930, as shown in Figure 1.

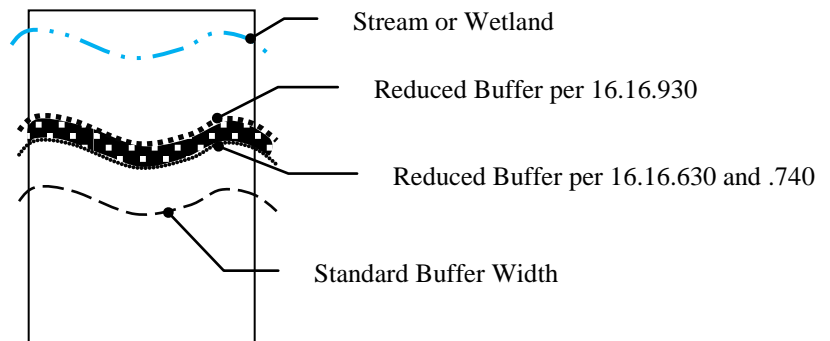


Figure 1: Habitat Evaluation Area shown in black.

### Vegetation

Vegetation should be characterized by estimating percent cover for trees (>20'), shrubs (<20'), woody vines, herbaceous plants, mosses, and plant species that comprise 10 percent or more of the vegetative cover in each stratum should be listed and dominant species identified.

### Important Habitat Features

This section provides an checklist of habitat features that might occur on a site along with references to wildlife that depend on each particular feature. When a particular feature is present, additional information should be recorded, on the back of the sheet or a separate sheet of paper, describing the habitat feature, quantifying the feature, and listing wildlife species that are likely to utilize the feature as it occurs on the site.

### Landscape Context

The section on landscape context is divided into two subsections, habitat continuity and connectivity with adjoining natural habitats. It may be necessary to consult aerial photographs<sup>2</sup> or maps to accurately characterize the landscape context for an assessment area.

Habitat continuity is related to the size of habitat patches or interrelated mosaics of habitat on the landscape. Patch size is an important characteristic affecting whether or not an area provides suitable habitat for some wildlife species. Although size thresholds differ from species to species, large blocks of unfragmented habitat are essential to these area-sensitive wildlife species.

Habitat connectivity within a landscape is important for providing migratory habitat for wildlife as well as for maintaining regional population dynamics that are essential for the long-term viability of local wildlife populations. The field data form includes a section for use in characterizing the landscape context of a proposed project site. Five options are available to choose from to characterize the relationship of the site to surrounding habitats. These include:

1. No direct connections to adjacent areas of wildlife habitat
2. Connectors numerous or assessment area is imbedded in a large area of natural habitat
3. Assessment area contributes to a limited number of connectors to adjacent areas of habitat
4. Assessment area serves a part of a sole connector to adjacent areas of habitat
5. Assessment area serves as the only connector to adjacent areas of habitat

**Habitat Degradation**

The last section of the field data form provides an opportunity to record evidence of significant habitat degradation, including chemical contamination, dumping, erosion or sedimentation problems, invasive exotic plants or animals, road or highway disturbance, and other human disturbance. A detailed study of potential habitat degradation is not required. However, if degradation is evident and will likely affect the habitat value of the area, it should be noted on the form, and described and discussed in the wildlife evaluation narrative.

**Project Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parcel Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Size of area being assessed:** \_\_\_\_\_acres/Sqft  
**Date(s) of site visit(s) and data collection:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date this form was completed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Person completing form:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Field Observers Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VEGETATION**

Number of trees (live or dead) > 30" DBH: \_\_\_\_\_

Number (or density) of Standing Dead Trees (potential for cavities):  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 6-12" dbh      \_\_\_\_\_ 12-18" dbh      \_\_\_\_\_ 18-24" dbh      \_\_\_\_\_ >24" dbh

Small mammal burrows       Abundant       Present       Absent

Plant Lists (species that comprise 10% or more of the vegetative cover in each strata, list in order of dominance):

Strata	Plant Species	Strata	Plant Species

## HABITAT FEATURES

### Cover/Perches/Basking/Denning Habitat

- Dense herbaceous cover (voles, small mammals, amphibians & reptiles)
- Large woody debris on the ground (small mammals, mink, amphibians & reptiles)

### Wildlife Dens/Nests (*Describe & quantify them on the back of this sheet*)

Nest(s) present of:  Bald Eagle  Osprey  Great Blue Heron  
Den(s) present of:  Otter  Mink  Beaver Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Project area is within:

- 100' of beaver, mink, or otter den
- 200' of Great blue heron or osprey nest(s)
- 1400' of a bald eagle nest

## LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

### Habitat Continuity (*Describe its importance on the back of this sheet*)

Is the assessment area part of a wetland complex at least (amphibians, waterfowl, mammals)	2.5 acres in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
	5.0 acres in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
	10.0 acres in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
	25.0 acres in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
Is the assessment area part of contiguous forested habitat at least (forest interior nesting birds)	50 acres in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
	100 acres in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
	250 acres in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
	500 acres in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no

### Connectivity with adjoining natural habitats

- No direct connections to adjacent areas of wildlife habitat (little connectivity function)
- Connectors numerous or assessment area is imbedded in a large area of natural habitat (limited connectivity function)
- Assessment area contributes to a limited number of connectors to adjacent areas of habitat (somewhat important for connectivity function)
- Assessment area serves as *part of* a sole connector to adjacent areas of habitat (important for connectivity function)
- Assessment area serves as *only* connector to adjacent areas of habitat (very important for connectivity function)

## HABITAT DEGRADATION (*Describe degradation and habitat impacts on back of the sheet*)

- Evidence of significant chemical contamination
- Evidence of significant levels of dumping

- Evidence of significant erosion or sedimentation problems
- Significant invasion of invasive plants (e.g. *Reed Canarygrass*, *Himalayan Blackberry*)
- Disturbance from roads or highways
- Other human disturbance

**Summary Habitat Impacts Quantification Table**

(For each important habitat characteristic identified within the w/in reduced buffer area per 16.16.900, describe amount/extent and distribution of that characteristic under current and post-construction conditions)

Vegetation, Habitat Feature, and/or landscape Context	Amount Impacted	Current (w/in reduced buffer area per 16.16.900)	Post-Construction (w/in reduced buffer area per 16.16.900)
	Units		

**Sketch map of the Assessment Area:**