

Preservation Guidance Criteria
Updated 3/9/04

Preservation is appropriate for those lands or waters that are critical to the continued ecological function of the wetland/riparian area ecosystem and for those ecosystems which contain high quality or rare wetland types.

Preservation projects must have demonstrable threat and must be in an ecoregion that has need*.
Sites must be composed of native vegetation. Riparian buffers must be forested with native woody vegetation.

Aquatic Protection Guidance:

Site is located within the 100-year floodplain where mapped by FEMA or is within a buffer up to 300¹ feet where FEMA maps are not available and the site is contiguous with or contributes to the protection of one or more of the following:

- 1) Permanently protected conservation lands such as a State Park, State Natural Area, Game Land, Educational State Forest, State Forest, Coastal Reserve or other nature preserve; or
- 2) A Significant Natural Heritage Area of state or national ranking as identified by the NC Natural Heritage Program; or
- 3) An Outstanding Resource Water or High Quality Water as identified by the Environmental Management Commission²; or
- 4) Critical Habitats identified by the NC Marine Fisheries Commission; Natural Shellfish Areas; or Primary Nursery Areas (both Inland and Coastal); or anadromous fish use areas, submerged aquatic vegetation areas
- 5) Waters which have been identified as having a benthos or fish community bioclassification³ of Excellent or Very Good by the Division of Water Quality**; or
- 6) Waters containing rare (S1G1, S1G2, S1G3, S2G2, S2G3⁴) species (including mussels, crayfish, other macroinvertebrates, fish and amphibians);
 naturally reproducing populations of native brook trout; or
 Federally listed Endangered or Threatened species or their designated critical habitat; or
- 7) Water supply watershed designation I, II**; or

Or

Site is located within the 100-year floodplain where mapped by FEMA or is within a buffer up to 300⁵ feet where FEMA maps are not available and the site is a:

- 8) Significant Natural Heritage Area of state or national ranking; or
- 9) Preservation of the Site contributes to the protection of a conservation corridor benefiting existing conserved lands or contained within a corridor planned by a local, regional, or state agency; or
- 10) Site is a high quality intact riparian natural area composed of native vegetation

Wetland Preservation Guidance:

Site is:

- 11) A wetland that contains, is part of, or is adjacent to a Significant Natural Heritage Area of state or national ranking as identified by the NC Natural Heritage Program. This includes wetlands that contain high quality or rare natural communities or occurrences of rare plants or animals and any adjacent habitat needed to ensure the continued ecological function of the wetland ecosystem and its inhabitants;
- 12) A Unique Wetland as identified by the NC Division of Water Quality;
- 13) A wetland identified as having Exceptional Functional Significance by the NC Division of Coastal Management;
- 14) A wetland contiguous with permanently protected conservation lands; or
- 15) Preservation of the site contributes to the protection of a conservation corridor benefiting existing conserved lands or contained within a corridor planned by a local, regional, or state agency; or
- 16) A wetland that contains Federally listed Endangered or Threatened species or includes their designated critical habitat; or
- 17) A wetland that meets the criteria for these classifications but have not yet been so designated.

¹ Wenger, S. 1999. A review of the scientific literature on riparian buffer width, extent and vegetation. Office of Public Service & Outreach, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, Athens and, Knutson, K.L., and V.L. Naef. 1997. Management recommendations for Washington=s priority habitats: riparian. Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia. 181pp.

² High Quality Waters are waters which are rated as excellent based on biological and physical/chemical characteristics through Division of Water Quality monitoring or special studies, native and special native trout waters (and their tributaries) designated by the Wildlife Resources Commission, primary nursery areas (PNA) designated by the Marine Fisheries Commission and other functional nursery areas designated by the Marine Fisheries Commission, all water supply watersheds which are either classified as WS-I or WS-II or those for which a formal petition for reclassification as WS-I or WS-II has been received from the appropriate local government and accepted by the Division of Water Quality and all Class SA waters.

³The North Carolina Index of Biotic Integrity is based on an examination of the structure and health of a fish community. The North Carolina EPT classification reflects the species richness of mayflies (Ephemeroptera), stoneflies (Plecoptera), and caddisflies (Trichoptera).

⁴ Global element ranks are established for each species by the national network of natural heritage programs and are based on a species rarity and threat of extinction. A G1 species is known from fewer than 5 locations in the world. State ranks are established by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, following the methodology shared by the natural heritage network.

⁵ Wenger, S. 1999. A review of the scientific literature on riparian buffer width, extent and vegetation. Office of Public Service & Outreach, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, Athens. and, Knutson, K.L., and V.L. Naef. 1997. Management recommendations for Washington=s priority habitats: riparian. Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia. 181pp.

*Need is defined as projected mitigation needed to offset DOT impacts during the Ecosystem Enhancement Program transition period within each Ecoregion.

**For water quality designations, please refer to h2o.enr.state.nc.us