

WAC 222-16-030 Water typing system. The objective of the water typing system is to correctly classify waters to inform the appropriate application of riparian protections and to accurately determine the extent of fish habitat at the landscape scale. This section identifies the criteria to classify waters. The requirements for determining fish use are described in WAC 222-16-0301.

The department classifies streams, lakes, and ponds on state and private forest lands of Washington state in cooperation with the departments of fish and wildlife, and ecology, and in consultation with affected Indian tribes. To assist applicants in determining water type classifications, the department shall prepare and update water type maps showing the location of Type S, F, and N (Np and Ns) Waters within the forested areas of the state.

All Type S Waters, and department concurred Type F and N Water breaks and Type Np and Ns Water breaks shown on the water type map are official and may be relied upon by landowners.

The water type maps and instructions for use are available for public review from the department. All water breaks concurred by the department are regulatory water type classifications; all other mapped, and unknown Type F and N Water breaks or Type Np and Ns Water breaks must be determined, in the field, by forest landowners or their representative. The water type break can be determined per this section or, for fish use, WAC 222-16-0301. Small forest landowners can contact the department for technical assistance and/or interdisciplinary teams to determine water typing breaks.

The department may convene an interdisciplinary team, as defined in WAC 222-16-010, to consider proposed modifications to the department's water type map; to address observed in-field conditions, including observations of fish; to address naturally occurring stream conditions or blockages making habitat inaccessible to fish; or, if a dispute arises concerning a water type classification in accordance with WAC 222-46-020.

Waters are classified using the following criteria:

* (1) **"Type S Water"** means all waters, within their bankfull width, as inventoried as "shorelines of the state" under chapter 90.58 RCW and the rules promulgated pursuant to chapter 90.58 RCW including periodically inundated areas of associated wetlands.

* (2) **"Type F Water"** means segments of natural waters including periodically inundated areas of their associated wetlands, not classified as Type S Waters, which have a fish, wildlife, or human use; which in any case contain fish habitat or are described by one of the following seven categories:

(a) Waters within lakes, ponds, or impoundments having a surface of 0.5 acre or greater at seasonal low water;

(b) Stream segments having a defined channel 20 feet or greater within the bankfull width and having a gradient of less than four percent;

(c) Waters which are off-channel habitat. These are areas important for rearing and survival of fish and include riverine ponds, wall-based channels, and stream associated wetlands. The area must be connected to Type F or Type S Water and accessible to fish during some portion of the year.

(i) For channelized streams, the edge of off-channel habitat is determined based on the outer edge of inundation of the stream at the bankfull elevation flow.

(ii) For nonchannelized streams, including stream associated wetlands, off-channel habitat is the outer edge of the area periodically inundated at the ordinary high water line.

(d) Waters used by fish. The department has prepared water type maps showing the location of Type F Waters. All department concurred Type F and N Water breaks shown on the water type map are official. Where fish use has not been determined:

(i) Waters having any of the following characteristics are presumed to have fish use:

(A) Stream segments having a defined channel of two feet or greater within the bankfull width in western Washington; or three feet or greater within the bankfull width in eastern Washington; and having a gradient of 16 percent or less;

(B) Stream segments having a defined channel of two feet or greater within the bankfull width in western Washington; or three feet or greater within the bankfull width in eastern Washington, and having a gradient greater than 16 percent and less than or equal to 20 percent, and having greater than 50 acres in contributing basin size in western Washington or greater than 175 acres contributing basin size in eastern Washington, based on hydrographic boundaries;

(C) Ponds or impoundments having a surface area of less than one acre at seasonal low water and having an outlet to a fish stream;

(D) Ponds or impoundments having a surface area of 0.5 acre or greater at seasonal low water;

(E) Waters within the anadromous fish floor, see WAC 222-16-0301.

(ii) The department shall waive or modify the characteristics in (d)(i) of this subsection where:

(A) Waters have confirmed, long term, naturally occurring water quality parameters incapable of supporting fish;

(B) Snowmelt streams with short flow cycles that do not support successful life history phases of fish. These streams typically have no flow in the winter months and discontinue flow by June 1st; or

(C) Sufficient information about a geomorphic region is available to support a departure from the characteristics in (d)(i) of this subsection, as determined in consultation with the department of fish and wildlife, department of ecology, affected tribes, and interested parties.

(e) Waters diverted for domestic use by more than 10 residential or camping units or by a public accommodation facility licensed to serve more than 10 persons, where the department determines the diversion is a valid appropriation of water. These waters shall be considered Type F Water upstream from the point of diversion for 1,500 feet or until the drainage area is reduced by 50 percent, whichever is less;

(f) Waters diverted for use by a federal, state, tribal or private fish hatchery. These waters shall be considered Type F Water upstream from the point of diversion for 1,500 feet, including tributaries if highly significant for protection of downstream water quality. The department may allow additional harvest beyond the requirements of Type F Water classification if the department determines after a landowner-requested interdisciplinary team assessment that:

(i) The management practices proposed by the landowner will adequately protect water quality for the fish hatchery; and

(ii) The additional harvest within the riparian management zone meets the requirements of the water type classification that would apply in the absence of the hatchery;

(g) Waters within a federal, state, local governmental entity, or private campground having more than 10 camping units. These are waters that enter a campground at the boundary of the park lands available for public use and come within 100 feet of a camping unit, trail or other park improvement;

(3) **"Type Np Water"** means all segments of natural waters within the bankfull width of perennial nonfish habitat streams. Perennial streams are flowing waters that do not go dry any time of a year of normal rainfall and include the intermittent dry portions of the perennial channel below the uppermost point of perennial flow.

(4) **"Type Ns Water"** means all segments of natural waters within the bankfull width of the defined channels that are not Type S, F, or Np Waters. These are seasonal, nonfish habitat streams in which surface flow is not present for at least some portion of a year of normal rainfall and are not located downstream from a Type Np Water. Type Ns Waters must be physically connected by an above-ground channel system to Type S, F, or Np Waters.

* (5) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Residential unit" means a home, apartment, condominium unit or mobile home, serving as the principal place of residence.

(b) "Camping unit" means an area intended and used for:

(i) Overnight camping or picnicking by the public containing at least a fireplace, picnic table and access to water and sanitary facilities; or

(ii) A permanent home or condominium unit or mobile home not qualifying as a "residential unit" because of part time occupancy.

(c) "Public accommodation facility" means a business establishment licensed to serve the public, such as a restaurant, tavern, motel or hotel.

(d) "Natural waters" only excludes water conveyance systems which are artificially constructed and actively maintained for irrigation.

(e) "Seasonal low water" means the conditions of the seven-day, two-year low water situation, as measured or estimated by accepted hydrologic techniques recognized by the department.

(f) "Bankfull width" for defined channels means a measurement over a representative section of at least 500 linear feet with at least 10 evenly spaced measurement points along the normal stream channel but excluding unusually wide areas of negligible gradient such as marshy or swampy areas, beaver ponds and impoundments. See board manual section 23.

(g) "Intermittent" means those segments of streams that normally go dry.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 76.09.040 and 76.09.370. WSR 25-19-057, s 222-16-030, filed 9/11/25, effective 3/1/26; WSR 06-23-096, § 222-16-030, filed 11/15/06, effective 12/16/06. Statutory Authority: RCW 76.09.040. WSR 05-12-119, § 222-16-030, filed 5/31/05, effective 7/1/05. Statutory Authority: Chapter 34.05 RCW, RCW 76.09.040, [76.09.]050, [76.09.]370, 76.13.120(9). WSR 01-12-042, § 222-16-030, filed 5/30/01, effective 7/1/01. Statutory Authority: RCW 76.09.040 and chapter 34.05 RCW. WSR 97-24-091, § 222-16-030, filed 12/3/97, effective 1/3/98. Statutory Authority: RCW 76.09.040, 76.09.170 and chapter 34.05 RCW. WSR 94-01-134, § 222-16-030, filed 12/20/93, effective 1/1/94. Statutory Authority: RCW 76.09.040, 76.09.050 and chapter 34.05 RCW. WSR 92-15-011, § 222-16-030, filed 7/2/92, effective 8/2/92. Statutory Authority: RCW 76.09.040. WSR 87-23-036 (Order 535),

§ 222-16-030, filed 11/16/87, effective 1/1/88; Order 263, §
222-16-030, filed 6/16/76.]