

WAC 222-16-0301 Verification of fish habitat and the break between Type F and Type N Water. To assist applicants in determining the water type classification, the department prepares water type maps showing the location of Type S, F, and N (Np and Ns) Waters within the forested areas of the state. The mapping tool and instructions for viewing water type maps is available on the department's website.

For the purposes of forest practices, landowners are required to verify the water type break between Type F and N Waters where fish use has not previously been determined. Department concurred breaks between Type F and N Waters are shown on the water type map. These breaks are official and can be used by the landowner. All other mapped stream breaks, and the establishment of the Type F and N Water break on streams not shown on the map, need to have the Type F and N Water break established through the application of the default physical characteristics, per WAC 222-16-030 (2)(d)(i); or, through the application of the fish habitat assessment method (FHAM) described in subsection (1) of this section.

The application of FHAM is intended to establish the line of demarcation between fish and nonfish habitat waters. No application of default physical characteristics or FHAM to determine the Type F and N Water break is allowed within the anadromous fish floor (AFF), unless a landowner requests an interdisciplinary team, as defined in WAC 222-16-010. The AFF is delineated on waters connected to saltwater by measurable physical stream characteristics of biological significance to anadromous fish, within which anadromous fish habitat is presumed, and upstream of which the default physical characteristics or a protocol fish survey under FHAM may be applied to establish the Type F and N Water type break. Board manual section 23 provides guidance on how to delineate the AFF.

*** (1) Fish habitat assessment methodology (FHAM).** The FHAM is a series of steps used to delineate the upper extent of fish habitat coincident with the regulatory water type break between Type F and Type N Waters. Proposals to change the department water type map must include documentation of the use of the FHAM on a form designated by the department. FHAM shall be applied in waters situated upstream from the anadromous fish floor or known fish use. Board manual section 23 provides additional technical guidance for conducting the FHAM.

The FHAM requires the identification of geomorphic features meeting the definition of a potential habitat break (PHB) as described in subsection (2) of this section.

(2) **"Potential habitat break"** means a permanent, distinct, and measurable change to in-stream physical characteristics. PHBs are typically associated with underlying geomorphic conditions and may consist of natural obstacles that physically limit fish access to upstream reaches or a distinct measurable change in channel gradient, bankfull width, or a combination of the two. Natural, nondeformable obstacle PHB includes vertical drops, steep cascades, bedrock sheets and bedrock chutes. Guidance on how to identify PHB is contained in board manual section 23.

(3) The steps to conduct FHAM are:

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| Step 1 | Locate the upstream extent of the AFF or other most upstream point of known fish use, whichever is furthest upstream. This is the survey initiation point. The process and sources used to determine known presence or fish habitat must be documented. Proponents are encouraged to contact the department of fish and wildlife and/or affected Indian tribes to assist in determining areas of known fish use. |
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| Step 2 | If the survey initiation point is the upstream extent of the AFF, begin FHAM. If the survey initiation point is based on the most upstream point of known fish use, locate the first PHB situated upstream. See the PHB criteria in subsection (2) of this section and associated guidance in board manual section 23. Begin FHAM directly upstream of the PHB. |
| Step 3 | If a fish is observed in the stream segment upstream from the first PHB, stop the electrofishing survey and proceed upstream to the next PHB. Repeat this process until no fish are observed upstream of a PHB. |
| Step 4 | When fish are not observed in the stream segment directly above a PHB, continue protocol surveying of all available habitats for 0.25 mile upstream of the PHB. If no fish are observed, this PHB becomes the end of fish habitat for the stream segment and the proposed water type break between Type F and Type N Waters. Document this location as the proposed habitat break. |

[Statutory Authority: RCW 76.09.040 and 76.09.370. WSR 25-19-057, s 222-16-0301, filed 9/11/25, effective 3/1/26.]