

# Critical Areas

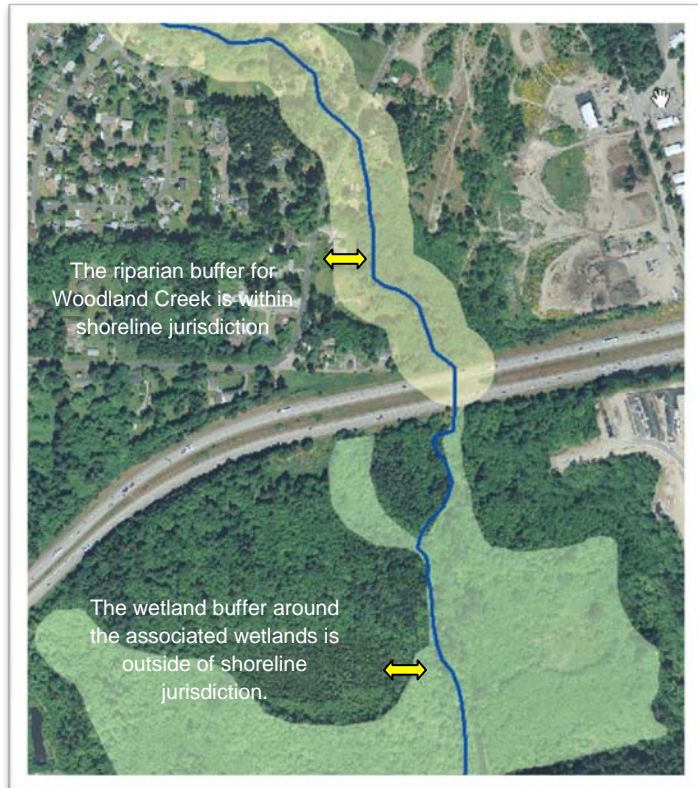
## Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater

When critical areas fall into shoreline jurisdiction, they are regulated under the Shoreline Management Act. These regulations must offer protection that is at least equal to that in the Critical Area Ordinances (CAO) adopted by local governments under the Growth Management Act.

To achieve this, the proposal is to include local critical area ordinances in the updated Shoreline Master Program for the following critical areas:

- Wetlands
- Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable waters
- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
- Frequently flooded areas
- Geologically hazardous areas

Critical area buffers are not included in shoreline jurisdiction. In some instances, shoreline jurisdiction overlaps with critical area buffers, such as along riparian corridors.



Woodland Creek and associated wetland shoreline jurisdiction (shaded) Lacey

### Differences between CAO and Shoreline Regulations

There are some important distinctions between critical areas regulated under the SMP compared to those regulated under CAO:

1. The only exemptions allowed within shoreline jurisdiction are those listed as being exempt from a shoreline substantial development permit (see permitting section).
2. Any reduction or averaging of critical area buffer zone width will require a shoreline variance.
3. Administrative variances (variances without going through the shoreline variance process) are not allowed in shoreline jurisdiction.
4. Within a shoreline jurisdiction, a shoreline conditions use permit and/or shoreline variance will serve as a Reasonable Use Exception review.



Riparian Corridor of Woodland Creek, Lacey