



## NATIVE VEGETATION RETENTION/RESTORATION PROCESS

This handout defines and describes the process for retaining, and where necessary restoring, native vegetation areas in Pierce County as required by Section 18J.15.030.

<b>PIERCE COUNTY NATIVE VEGETATION RETENTION/RESTORATION PROCESS</b>	
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Native Vegetation Areas include the native groundcover, understory shrub and tree canopy mix that is native and appropriate to the geographic, soil, and water conditions of a particular area of Pierce County, i.e., the historic, indigenous plant community type that is appropriate for the underlying soils and pattern of precipitation for a given geographic area.</li>   <li>❑ A primary goal of vegetation retention is the preservation of native, mature forests and woodlands in order to retain the pre-disturbed natural hydrologic function of a site. The following factors should be considered when assessing the function and value of those portions of the site:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retention of as much natural vegetation on the site as possible is necessary to more closely mimic the natural hydrologic cycle.</li> <li>▪ Those portions of the site that are highest priority to retain in a natural vegetation condition are primary conservation areas and secondary conservation areas.</li> <li>▪ In residential developments some portion may be incorporated into the individual lot design where strict covenants or other protection measures are put in place. Where individual lots are utilized, they should be connected either physically or hydrologically to the primary or secondary conservation areas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>PIERCE COUNTY NATIVE VEGETATION RETENTION/RESTORATION PROCESS</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Retention of Native Vegetation Areas is required in <u>all</u> Urban and Rural Zones.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Where either no native vegetation exists or there is insufficient groundcover, understory shrubs, <u>and/or</u> trees, the area shall be restored.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A certain percentage of a total site is required to be retained or restore to a native vegetative condition. The uniform county-wide standard is based on the zone in which the property is located. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Exception:</u> In the Gig Harbor Community Plan area, there are additional native vegetative screening buffer requirements for certain Urban and Rural zones. These buffers may count toward the minimum native area required for the zone.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Native Vegetation Area Retention Standards (18J.15.030.A.3.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The percent of gross acreage to be retained or restored as Native Vegetation Area is based on zone and location in designated Open Space Corridors.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Landscape buffer requirements in the Landscaping and Buffering Section of the Zoning Code (18A.35.030.C.2.a. - Tables 1, 2 and 3), and appropriate community plan, must use native shrub and tree species.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Non-residential uses in residential zones require a lower percentage of Native Vegetation Area than residential uses. The lower standard is the same as that for residential zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Square footage of playfields on school sites, up to a maximum of 30% of the site, is subtracted from the gross acreage prior to determining the percentage of Native Vegetation Area required.</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Non-residential sites of less than 2 acres may clear and replant to the Native Vegetation Area standard required by the zone.</li> </ul>

## Pierce County Native Vegetation Retention/Restoration Process

### Native Vegetation Area Retention Standards

(18J.15.030.A.3.)

- Remodeling projects must meet the Native Vegetation Area requirement when remodel value is 60% of greater than the replacement value of the existing buildings, as calculated by the Building Division.
- In Parkland-Spanaway-Midland, small lots are exempt from the requirement to preserve or restore Native Vegetation Areas if they meet the following conditions:
  - Within 0.5 mile of SR-7;
  - A lot less than 0.75 acre and/or a combination of adjacent lots each less than 0.75 acre and totaling less than 4 acres;
  - Lot was created before September 3, 2002; and
  - Lot is located in an Employment Center, Urban Center or Urban District zone.
- A certain percentage of a total site is required to be retained or restore to a native vegetative condition. The uniform county-wide standard is based on the zone in which the property is located.
  - Exception: Properties in the Community Employment (CE), Neighborhood Center (NC), Moderate Density Single-Family (MSF), Single-Family (SF), Rural 10 (R10), Reserve 5 (Rsv 5), and Rural Sensitive Resource (RSR) zones in the Gig Harbor Community Plan area require native vegetative screening buffers that may count toward the minimum native area required for the zone. (Refer to Sections 18J.40.050.D.2. and 18J.40.050.D.1.)
- Landscape compatibility buffer requirements in the Zoning Code and the Community Plans remain. If retained or restored with native vegetation, these buffer areas can be used to satisfy the Native Vegetation Area requirement.

### Native Vegetation Area Retention Guidelines

(18J.15.030.C)

- The guidelines are to be used by the applicant and staff in determining whether the portion of a site set aside or restored meets the intent of the Native Vegetation Area requirement.

## Pierce County Native Vegetation Retention/Restoration Process

<p><b>Replacement Standards – General</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Native Area Restoration Plans for Plats and Multi-Family Residential Uses shall be prepared by Registered Landscape Architects only.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Native Area Restoration Plans for Non-Residential Uses shall be prepared by Registered Landscape Architects or Certified Nursery Professionals only.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The following resources may be used as resources for identifying appropriate native plants:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Pierce County Northwest Native Plant List, dated October 1, 2003;</li> <li>▪ The WSU Cooperative Extension Native Plant Identification Database and plant association lists, found at <a href="http://gardening.wsu.edu/nwnative">http://gardening.wsu.edu/nwnative</a>;</li> <li>▪ The native trees in the Pierce County Recommended Tree Species list.</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Native plants choices identified by the landscape architect or nursery professional, subject to approval by Current Planning Staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Replacement Standards -  Plats and Multi-Family Residential Uses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grass, groundcover, understory shrubs, and canopy trees shall be planted within the native open space tracts or areas at the following ratio:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grass: seeded at 3 pounds per 1000 square feet;</li> <li>▪ Groundcover: 4"-container plants at 1/125 square feet and native groundcover seed mix at 1 pound per acre;</li> <li>▪ Understory Shrubs (evergreen and/or deciduous): 1-gallon plants at 1/300 square feet; and</li> <li>▪ Canopy Trees: 2-gallon plants at 1/400 square feet.</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In laying out the restoration plan, applicant is encouraged to cluster groundcover and shrubs to mimic natural conditions and to increase survivability.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The number of required trees may be reduced by the number of "significant" and other native trees being retained on site at the ratio specified in Table 18H.40.040.F.</li> </ul>

**Pierce County  
Native Vegetation Retention/Restoration Process**

<p><b>Replacement Standards - Plats and Multi-Family Residential Uses (continued)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Native Area Restoration Plan shall include a weed control plan.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Native Area Restoration Plan shall include provisions for retention and replacement of topsoil and/or compost and installation of bark mulch.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Native Area Restoration Plan shall include a temporary irrigation plan for the first dry season after planting.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Native Area Restoration Plan shall include a monitoring plan for the first three years following completion of restoration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Replacement Standards - Non-Residential Uses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The percentage of a site required to be "native" may be incorporated into the parking lot landscaping, perimeter buffers, street landscaping, and other on-site landscaping areas so long as each portion of a site proposed to be "native" includes native groundcover, shrubs <u>and</u> trees.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There are no minimum planting standards but the planting design shall be sufficient to comply with the Native Vegetation Area Retention Guidelines (18J.15.030.C) and applicable Community Plan policies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Non-residential sites greater than 2 acres that have the potential for retaining or creating sizable pockets of native habitat to better comply with the Native Vegetation Area Retention Guidelines will be encouraged to restore sites to the habitat standard for restoration of residential sites.</li> </ul>

## Pierce County Native Vegetation Retention/Restoration Process

**Relationship between  
the Native Vegetation  
Retention/Restoration  
Process (18J.15.030)  
and the Tree  
Conservation Plan  
Process (18H.40)**

- The Tree Conservation Plan process stresses the importance of retaining existing trees, particularly native trees, in meeting the requirement to preserve/restore a certain number of trees per acre based on zone. (18H.40.040.A.)
- Applicants should coordinate the conservation of trees required by Chapter 18H.40 with the Native Vegetation Areas required by Section 18J.15.030 to avoid the need to restore some or all of the native groundcover, shrubs or trees required by 18J.15.030.
- A combined tree conservation/native area retention/restoration plan may be submitted so long as it addresses the required elements of both Chapters 18H.40 and Section 18J.15.030.