

PHS-At-A-Glance: Biodiversity Areas and Corridors Map and Guide

Products: PHS Biodiversity Areas and Corridors Map/Technical Report and User Guide

Where to Access the Map and User Guide: geo.wa.gov (search term “Biodiversity Areas and Corridors <county name>”). Technical Report and User Guide: [PHS Publications webpage](#).

Map

Description: This map shows the general locations of Biodiversity Areas and Corridors (BAC) for the Columbia Plateau as defined by WDFW’s [Priority Habitats and Species](#) (PHS) program. This map was derived from data generated by the *Washington Connected Landscapes Project: Analysis of the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion*.

For its purpose as a tool to flag regions with high-quality, intact wildlife habitat and corridors, this mapped data is Best Available Science according to the criteria provided in [WAC 365-195](#) for the Growth Management Act (GMA, [RCW 36.70A](#)).

Technical Report: The methodology used to create the BAC map is described in *PHS Technical Report: Biodiversity Areas and Corridors Map*, available at the [PHS Publications webpage](#). This report describes the map’s underlying source data, methods, errors (and steps taken to minimize errors), and the results. Users may either cite the data itself or the Technical Report when referring to the map as Best Available Science.

Maintenance, Updates: PHS staff will review and revise the PHS Biodiversity Areas and Corridors map to determine whether land use changes warrant a change or refinement in PHS Biodiversity Areas and Corridors delineation or if improved data become available.

User Guide

Description: The document *PHS Local Government User Guide: Biodiversity Areas and Corridors Map* describes the intended uses of the PHS Biodiversity Areas and Corridors map and how it relates to local government land use responsibilities under the GMA, Shoreline Management Act (SMA, [RCW 90.58](#)), [Voluntary Stewardship Program](#) (VSP), and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA, [RCW 43.21C](#)).

User Guide’s Key Messages

Intended Use: The PHS Biodiversity Areas and Corridors map provides local governments and decision-makers with a source of landscape-scale information that is useful for flagging regions of

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high-quality, intact habitat and wildlife corridors of regional ecological significance. This map is intended for informing regional-scale planning activities and is not meant for assessing site-specific land use proposals (e.g., where to site buildings on a parcel), except for major projects with large spatial footprints.

Informed Use of the Data: The BAC map was developed using a modeled dataset intended for coarse regional scale applications. That modeled dataset was developed with sources of data that included satellite imagery. For this reason, further review of local landscape conditions and refinement of any boundary lines are necessary additional steps before designating distinct BAC boundary lines.

Key Messages about applying the maps in land use decision making

GMA: The BAC map can be used to inform regional-scale, long-range planning decisions such as:

- Planning for expansions of Urban Growth Areas,
- Designating rural and natural resource lands,
- Designating greenbelts and open spaces, including open space corridors,
- Identifying eligibility for incentives, including density transfers, conservation easements, and other innovative habitat protection mechanisms.
- Providing context for understanding potential landscape-scale impacts of proposed land use changes that occur within Biodiversity Areas and Corridors.

The map is not intended for reviewing siting decisions on individual parcels, except for project proposals with larger footprints, such as renewable energy facilities.

VSP: The BAC map can help counties identify fish and wildlife habitats of local importance, where to prioritize areas for landowner outreach, and where to implement conservation activities that can help counties meet their VSP goals and benchmarks for protecting and enhancing critical areas. The map may also support VSP participating counties when applying for competitive local, state, and federal grant programs that support local VSP efforts.

SEPA: The BAC map is useful for reviewing SEPA checklists submitted by others to verify that they are considering potential impacts to PHS Biodiversity Areas and Corridors.

SMA: Current planners can use the BAC map for development within shoreline jurisdiction as outlined above for GMA use. Long-range planners can refer to this map when considering changes to Shoreline Environment Designations.