

PROCESSING REGIONAL GENERAL HPAs

As part of the Habitat Program's effort to streamline the HPA process we are issuing statewide, region-wide, and area-wide HPAs for routine, benign, low-risk, and low-impact projects whenever that's appropriate. Typically, the Habitat Biologists write area- and region-wide GHPAs and staff in the Regulatory Services Section issue multi-region and statewide GHPAs. The following guidance replaces all previous guidance on this subject and is effective immediately.

WAC 220-660-050 lists certain requirements when applying for and processing GHPAs. Those requirements include:

- WDFW and the applicant must agree on the fish protection provisions before the application is submitted
- The GHPA provisions must fully mitigate impacts to fish life
- WDFW may negotiate the scope and scale of the projects covered by the GHPA
- We may issue a GHPA for the same work in multiple water bodies across a large geographic area
- The projects must be relatively simple so the GHPA does not include site-specific provisions
- The projects must have little to no variability in site conditions or work performed

When we know that a potential applicant is interested in applying for a GHPA we should let them know that rule requires them to reach resolution with the permitting biologist prior to submitting an application. The best method to meet this requirement is through the submittal of a pre-application in APPS. Upon receipt of a pre-application, the permitting biologist can work out the draft GHPA provisions and get them approved by the Regional Habitat Program Manager (RHPM) and Regulatory Services Section biologist without risk of exceeding the statutory process time requirements. Because APPS does not force an applicant to choose the pre-application process for GHPAs, we may get some complete applications. In those cases, if the project type qualifies for a GHPA, the applicant should either be asked to request the application be placed on hold until agreement can be reached on the draft provisions, or asked to agree to have the application returned to them to resubmit as a pre-application. If the application does not qualify for a GHPA, the Habitat Biologist must ask support staff to send the application back for amendment.

To ensure statewide consistency, Habitat Biologists must either use existing GHPA templates provided on the Habitat Program SharePoint site (changing only identified specifics in the template, such as start and end dates, or work windows), or have the draft GHPA reviewed by a Regulatory Services Section biologist. In either case, the draft GHPA must be routed through the RHPM who will decide whether to forward to Olympia staff or approve. Allow for a one-week Olympia review period. The RHPM is responsible for ensuring that the edits made by the Regulatory Services Section biologist are incorporated into the final GHPA, or to discuss why the edits are not appropriate.

PROCEDURE FOR REGIONAL GHPA REVIEW

Habitat Biologist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determines that the project qualifies for a General HPA. 2. Works with applicant to draft provisions for GHPA in Pre-application or On Hold status using existing GHPA as template (available on SharePoint) or by importing provisions from specified applications in APPS. 3. Notifies Assistant Regional Habitat Program Manager of need for review and comment, and which template(s) was used if any.
Assistant Regional Habitat Program Manager	Comments on draft and requests review by Regional Habitat Program Manager (include template info, if applicable).

Template Option

Template used with minimal edits	Regional Habitat Program Manager	Makes any minor changes needed and approves issuance of GHPA by biologist.
	Habitat Biologist	Issues GHPA with changes suggested by Regional Habitat Program Manager

No Template Option

No template used or template modified significantly	Regional Habitat Program Manager	Edits provisions as needed and requests review by Regulatory Services Section Biologist (include template info, if applicable).
	Regulatory Services Section Biologist	Reviews for statewide consistency and returns comments to Regional Habitat Program Manager and Habitat Biologist within one week of receipt.
	Habitat Biologist	Issues GHPA with changes suggested by Regional Habitat Program Manager and/or Regulatory Services Section Biologist. Any disagreements regarding edits must be resolved prior to HPA issuance through discussions with biologist, Regional Habitat Program Manager, and Regulatory Services Section Biologist.