



# Vegetation Management

## Why does the SMP regulate vegetation?

Shoreline vegetation performs important ecological functions, including stabilizing banks and minimizing erosion and landslides, and providing nearshore habitat and food critical to aquatic life.

The purpose of the SMP's vegetation conservation provisions is to ensure that actions affecting shoreline vegetation allow shoreline property owners to use and maintain their property, while protecting the valuable functions that vegetation provides.

## What vegetation activities are affected?

The vegetation conservation provisions apply to clearing, grading, grubbing, pruning/trimming, and vegetation protection, enhancement, and control activities. The provisions do not apply to removing or maintaining existing landscaping (such as lawns and gardens) or to planting native species. The provisions may apply if you expand your existing landscaping into a non-landscaped area, but do not apply if you convert existing lawn into a garden, or vice versa.

## Vegetation removal

Any native vegetation removed within shoreline jurisdiction must be replaced. Vegetation removed nearest the water (within 50 feet) requires that more vegetation be replanted than vegetation removed further from the water. Trees removed require the most mitigation, and grass, pasture, non-woody, and non-native vegetation requires less replanting. Removal of Oregon white oak trees requires special replanting in coordination with the County and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The figure on the following page illustrates replanting requirements for vegetation removed within the shoreline based on distance from the water and what type of vegetation is removed. Replanting requirements range from equal to the area impacted (1:1) to three times the impact area (3:1). Replanted areas must contain a minimum of five native trees and 10 shrubs per 1,000 square feet. If you are proposing to remove shoreline vegetation, you will be required to submit a vegetation management plan to the County to demonstrate how your project will meet the replanting requirements, including a site plan showing both the impacted and proposed replanting areas, types of vegetation you will plant, and how you will maintain them. The County will review the vegetation management plan along with other plans and reports submitted as part of your shoreline development proposal.



### Quick Reference

This handout should be used in partnership with the adopted [Skamania County Shoreline Master Program](#) and the Property Owners Handbook.

### SMP Reference

+ **Vegetation Conservation:**  
[Section 3.7](#)

### Native plant resources

- + [Skamania County Noxious Weed Program](#)
- + [Underwood Conservation District's Landowner Handbook](#)

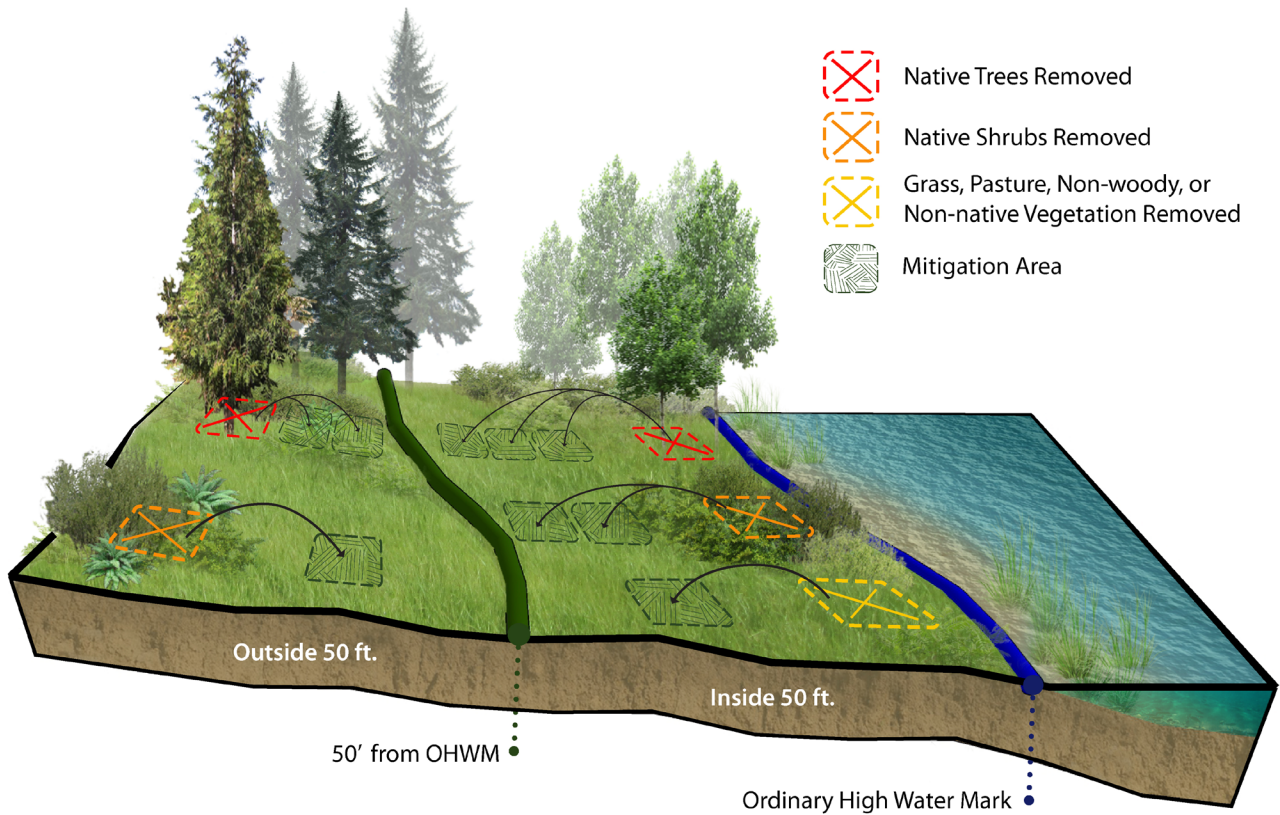


### Questions

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### Pruning or trimming for view maintenance

Landowners may be allowed to prune trees to maintain, create, or expand shoreline views as long as SMP requirements are met. No more than 1/3 of a tree's limbs can be removed, the overall health of the tree must be protected, and the understory vegetation must be left intact. Tree topping is prohibited within SMP jurisdiction. Tree pruning must follow the technical standards of the Tree Care Industry Association's ANSI A300 Part 1 (read more at [TCIA.org](http://TCIA.org)).

### Noxious weed removal

Eradicating invasive plants and noxious weeds helps keep our shorelines healthy. Landowners may remove these types of vegetation using hand tools (preferred) or spot-spraying and then replanting the cleared area with native woody plants at the required ratios based on type of vegetation removed and distance from the shoreline.

For large-scale noxious weed removal using mechanical equipment or broad application of chemicals, cleared areas must be stabilized to prevent erosion and then replanted to required ratios.

Property owners should coordinate with the Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program prior to clearing.

### Hazard trees

A hazard tree is one that is determined by an arborist to have a high probability of falling on a structure due to disease, structural defects, exposed root ball or wind throw exposure. Landowners must first attempt to eliminate the risk by pruning, crown thinning, or other techniques that retain some of the tree's ecological function. If these methods do not eliminate the risk, the hazard tree may be converted to a wildlife snag or be removed based on an arborist's report. Hazard tree removal requires replanting at a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio, depending on location. The County will provide a response to hazard tree removal requests in 20 business days.



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