

LEWIS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Frank Corbin, Chair

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To: Lewis County Board of County Commissioners
From: Lewis County Planning Commission
Date: February 11, 2025
Subject: **Transmittal to the BOCC – Amendment to Lewis County Code, Chapters 17.10 Definition of Qualified Professional**

Dear Commissioners:

The purpose of this report is to transmit to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) draft amendments to the Lewis County Code. The staff report was provided to Planning Commission on December 2 2024, available online at https://lewiscountywa.gov/documents/15184/2024-12-02_StaffReport_QualifiedProf.pdf.

Receiving correct and accurate critical area reports is an important part of ensuring that Lewis County meets the Washington State Critical Areas Ordinance. Wetland reports and delineations can be complicated and require extensive knowledge and expertise to ensure that all state and federal guidelines are met. Staff requested a minimum requirement of a bachelor's degree in a relevant field as well as minimum years of experience. The Planning Commission believes it is important to allow people with an associate's degree and years of experience to continue to perform wetland and stream assessments, rather than requiring a bachelor's degree. The commissioners expressed that a degree alone does not mean a person is able to produce adequate assessments and that experience is a more effective measure of ability.

Recommendation

After holding a public hearing on January 14, 2025, Lewis County Planning Commission voted to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) not approve the draft provided in the staff report. The Planning Commission directed staff to create a version of the code that allows for a path to becoming qualified based on experience, similar to Pierce County (see Appendix A). The Planning Commission appointed Commissioner Bob Russell to work with staff and to present to the BOCC.

Findings of Fact

[STAFF WILL ADD]

Being duly authorized to transmit the recommendations on behalf of the Lewis County Planning Commission, I hereby respectfully submit the documents to the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners.

Submitted by _____ Date _____

Frank Corbin, Chair
Lewis County Planning Commission

Become a Qualified Specialist

Wetland Specialist, Fisheries Biologist, Wildlife Biologist

Pierce County Code Title 18 Development Regulations, [PCC 18.25.030](#) requires qualified professionals to prepare letters, reports, studies and mitigation plans related to wetlands and fish and wildlife. To be placed on the [Qualified Specialists List](#), please follow the instructions in this guide.

Note: a fee applies for [Qualification Review](#)

Submittal Requirements

1. Supporting Qualifications (see next page for instructions)
2. Outline
 - The name(s) of the individuals requesting to be placed on the roster
 - The specialist type(s) the individual is qualified (applying) for (e.g., Wetland Specialist Type 1, Fisheries Biologist, etc.); and
 - The type of supporting documentation being provided. See example on page 3.

Email to:

Scott.Sissons@PierceCountyWa.gov

or

Mail to:

Pierce County Planning & Public Works
Attn: Scott Sissons
2401 South 35th Street, Room 175
Tacoma, WA 98409

Wetland Specialist:

An individual with experience and training in wetlands issues and with experience in performing delineations, analyzing wetland functions and values, analyzing wetland impacts, and recommending wetland mitigation and restoration.

The individual should be familiar with the requirements of [PCC Title 18E \(Critical Areas\)](#) and the following:

- *Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetland*
- *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual*, 1987 edition
- *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region (Version 2.0)*, dated May 2010
- *Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western Washington 2014 Update*, Department of Ecology

Choose Type 1 or Type 2

Type 1 Requirements	Documentation
B.S. or B.A. or equivalent degree in biology, botany, environmental studies, fisheries, soil science, wildlife, agriculture or related field; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma (copy if degree is stated) • Unofficial Transcript(s); or Certificate(s) of Completion
Two years of related work experience; and minimum of one-year experience preparing wetland reports and mitigation plans and delineating wetlands using the manuals listed above.	Employment description, phone number and address.
Additional education may substitute for one year of related work experience.	Unofficial transcript (24 graduate semester hours equal one year)

Type 2 Requirements	Documentation
Four years of related work experience and training.	Employment description, phone number and address.
Minimum of two years' experience preparing wetland reports and mitigation plans and delineating wetlands using the manuals listed above	Employment description, phone number and address.

Fisheries Biologist

Requirements	Documentation
A degree in fisheries; or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma (copy if degree is stated) • Unofficial transcript(s); or Certificate(s) of Completion
Certification by the American Fisheries Society; or	Certificate
Five years professional experience as a fisheries biologist	Work history in the example format on page 3

Wildlife Biologist:

Requirements	Documentation
A degree in wildlife biology; or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma (copy if degree is stated) • Unofficial transcript(s); or Certificate(s) of Completion
Certification by the Wildlife Society; or	Certificate
Five years professional experience as a wildlife biologist	Work history in the example format on page 3

Example of Job Description and Format

If qualifying for Fisheries or Wildlife specialist, please specify "Percentage of time conducting wildlife-related work," or "Percentage of time conducting fisheries-related work."

Calculate the amount of work experience you have in the format provided at the bottom of this page.

Job Title: Biologist **Dates:** 2/1/2019 to 8/31/2022 **Total Time:** 30 months

Supervisor: Carol I. Smith, Wetlands Inc., 1414 Clean Stream, Seattle, 99991

Telephone: 206-882-1122

Year 1: 2/1/2019 to 1/31/2020

Percentage of time conducting wildlife-related work: 25%

Conducted wildlife studies, including general wildlife surveys and habitat evaluation procedures. Work included both data collection in the field and report writing. Projects included a vegetation analysis for a deer browse study for the Burnt Ridge Development.

Percentage of time delineating wetlands: 30%;

Percentage of time writing wetland reports and mitigation plans: 40%

I delineated 25 wetlands, most of which were located on 1- to 5-acre sites, working under the direction of a senior biologist. I prepared 20 wetland reports, and 5 mitigation plans; all of these were team projects. Projects included a 5-acre wetland near South Hill, Pierce County, Project # 558-90.

(Note: Remaining 5% is non-related work experience.)

Year 2: 2/1/2020 to 1/31/2021

Percentage of time conducting Wildlife-related work: 25%

Conducted wildlife studies, including general wildlife surveys and habitat evaluation procedures. Did field work and wrote wildlife sections for 2 EIS projects. Work included both data collection in the field and report writing. Projects included a bald eagle survey near Summit Ridge.

Percentage of time delineating wetlands: 30%;

Percentage of time writing wetland reports and mitigation plans: 40%

I delineated 20 wetlands of varying size, working under the direction of a senior biologist. I prepared 20 wetland reports, and 2 mitigation plans; about 70% of these were team projects. Projects included a 40-acre wetland near North Hill, King County Project # 4428-91.

(Note: Remaining 5% is non-related work experience.)

Year 3: 2/1/2021 to 8/31/2022

Percentage of time delineating wetlands: 40%;

Percentage of time writing wetland reports and mitigation plans: 55%

I delineated 20 wetlands including delineating wetlands on 5 large 150- to 500-acre sites. Each large site had at least 7 wetlands. I prepared 20 wetland reports, and 5 mitigation plans on these complex projects.

Duties include the review and administration of other wetland biologists' work.

(Note: Remaining 5% of time is administrative-related work experience.)

Duration of Wetland Experience:

Number of years delineating wetlands and preparing wetland reports and mitigation plans:

$(1 \times 0.70) + (1 \times 0.70) + (1 \times 0.95) = 28.20$ months or ~2 years and 4 months.