

2024

COUNTY INSPECTIONS

Prairie Plant Inspections



THURSTON COUNTY

Prairie Plant Inspections are required by the county's Critical Areas Ordinance regulations (County Code Title 24). When you apply for a permit, the county checks its map to see if the project property has prairie plant soils. If it does, the entire parcel is inspected to see if prairie plants are on it.

ABOUT PRAIRIE PLANT INSPECTION

Inspection dates mid-April - mid Sept.

Choose an Option Use County staff or your consultant.

Inspector looks for Mima Mounds, oak trees & plants listed in County Code Title 24.

Number of visits One or two visits, depending on site conditions.

Prepare for Inspection Don't mow, dig, move dirt, level mounds, etc. before inspection. Details online.

PRAIRIE SOILS LIST

Prairie	
X	Cagey
X	Everett
X	Indianola
X	Nisqually
X	Spana
X	Spanaway
	Alderwood
	Kapowsin
	McKenna
	Norma
	Yelm
X	Baldhill
X	Grove
X	Tenino

VERY IMPORTANT APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Fill out application forms completely, correctly & neatly.** Missing or unreadable forms can delay your application.
- 2. Give us your correct contact info & check your messages.** We use the contact information on your application to reach you with inspection scheduling dates and times. Each year applicants miss inspections because they gave us the wrong contact information or didn't check their messages.
- 3. Put property access information on your application.** Provide access to locked gates; remove or secure animals; and let us know where and how to access fenced areas.
- 4. Follow Prairie Plant mowing requirements & timing.** When and how you mow is **very important**. The entire parcel is inspected, and mowing helps inspectors see the ground. But the ground needs time to settle before inspection, so no mowing 3 weeks before inspection. See the detailed Mowing Instructions on the back and follow them.

More info on back.

www.ThurstonCountyBDC.com | search 'prairie plant inspection'

MOWING INSTRUCTIONS

PRAIRIE PLANT-ONLY INSPECTION MOWING REQUIREMENTS						
Material type	Heavy Grass	Mixed Vegetation	Shrubs & Scrub	Wildflower & Weeds	Scotch Broom (Remove cuttings)	Open Dirt/Mounds
Jan-March	Ok to mow.	Ok to mow.	Ok to mow.	Ok to mow.	Ok to mow until 3 weeks before inspection.	Don't mow at all.
April	NO MOWING 3 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR SCHEDULED INSPECTION. BEFORE THAT, LIGHT MOWING OK.				Handheld non-mechanical cutter only. Anytime before inspection ok.	Don't mow at all.
May					Handheld non-mechanical cutter only. Anytime before inspection ok.	Don't mow at all.
June					Handheld non-mechanical cutter only. Anytime before inspection ok.	Don't mow at all.
July					Handheld non-mechanical cutter only. Anytime before inspection ok.	Don't mow at all.
August					Handheld non-mechanical cutter only. Anytime before inspection ok.	Don't mow at all.
September					Handheld non-mechanical cutter only. Anytime before inspection ok.	Don't mow at all.
October					Handheld non-mechanical cutter only. Anytime before inspection ok.	Don't mow at all.

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does the county know if I have prairie plants?

Staff look up your property on a county soils map.

How do I schedule an inspection?

The county schedules a county inspector for you when you apply for a building permit or a critical areas determination, only if your property is mapped with prairie soils.

Can I hire my own inspector?

Yes. At your own expense. They must follow county instructions and submit their report to us. Find 2024 county inspection guidelines, letter to inspectors and report standards at www.ThurstonCountyBDC.com, search "Prairie Plant Inspection."

Why does the County do this inspection?

It's required by County Code Title 24-Critical Areas adopted by the county's elected officials, the Board of County Commissioners.

What if the inspector finds prairie plants?

Choose a mitigation option that meets county code including planting prairie plants to replace any lost to development. Detailed options are on the prairie plant page at www.ThurstonCountyBDC.com, search "Prairie Plant Inspection."

CONTACT INFORMATION vince.mcdowell@co.thurston.wa.us
PHONE 360-867-2118 | FAX 360-754-2939