



THURSTON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

OPEN SPACE TAX PROGRAM

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA CHECKLIST OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATION

Use this checklist to help you determine whether your property is eligible for open space classification. For assistance in obtaining information you need, see the Help List.

The following list includes the Priority Resources of the Thurston County Public Benefit Rating System. The checklist embodies the eligibility criteria for each Priority Resource.

- ◆ Where a criterion ends with "**AND**" the following additional criterion must be met.
- ◆ Criteria separated by "OR" indicate that either criterion (or set of criteria) is sufficient to qualify.

Your rating may not exceed 9 points from this list of Priority Resources. Also, your public benefit rating is limited to a maximum of 3 Priority Resources from the list.

HIGH PRIORITY RESOURCES (3 points each)

a. Archaeological Sites

Is the site on file with the Washington State Office of Archaeology?

OR,

Has an archaeologist determined the site to be eligible for open space classification? **AND**

Has the site been accepted for inclusion in the State's inventory?

b. Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land (FACL)

Has the land been previously classified as agricultural land, but now is no longer eligible for continued classification as agricultural land? **AND**

Has the County Assessor notified you that the land will be removed from agricultural classification because it is no longer eligible? **AND**

- Do you have a Land Conservation Plan with measures to maintain and protect the property for future commercial agricultural use, such as periodic large brush clearing, and soil erosion control? **AND**
- Are any of the following uses on the property: non-agricultural buildings or special uses, such as golf courses? (Note: such properties are not eligible.)

OR,

- Is the land classified as agricultural land or timber land, or designated forest land under RCW 84.34 or 84.33? (Note: such properties are not eligible.) **AND**
- Can you demonstrate that the land has been used for commercial agriculture (as defined in WAC 458-30-200(12) within the most recent ten years? **AND**
- Has the land been irrevocably devoted to a use inconsistent with agricultural uses? (Note: such lands are not eligible) **AND**
- If the land is used for a residence, is it at least twenty acres? **AND**
- Is the land within a long-term agriculture zoning district? **AND**
- Do you have a Land Conservation Plan with measures to maintain and protect the property for future commercial agricultural use, such as periodic large brush clearing, and soil erosion control? **AND**
- Are any of the following uses on the property: non-agricultural buildings, special uses, such as golf courses? (Note: such properties are not eligible.)

c. Fish-Rearing Habitat: Ponds and Streams

- Does the land include a water body classified as a Type 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 stream by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources? **AND**
- If the water body is a stream or river, does the land contain at least five hundred feet of shoreline length; alternatively, if the water body is a pond or lake, does the land contain at least one acre of pond area? **AND**
- Is any contiguous upland area (defined as land outside the ordinary high water mark or any associated wetland or flood plain) limited to the equivalent of one acre per 100 feet of shoreline length, or four times the pond or lake area? (Note: upland area beyond these limits is not eligible for classification and must be excluded.) **AND**
- Is the land also eligible as Significant Wildlife Habitat for open space classification? (Note: land may not receive points in both categories.)

d. Geological and Shoreline Features

If the site contains patterned ground (Mima Mounds):

- Is it larger than 10 acres? **AND**
- Does it provide a clear sense of the natural mound environment? **AND**
- Is it buffered from visual intrusions or adjacent development?

OR,

- Is it larger than 160 acres, with at least 67% mounded? (Multiple owners may apply together.)

OR,

- Has the Washington Department of Natural Resources accepted the site as a Natural Heritage Preserve?
- If the site contains a shoreline or other type of geological feature:
 - Is 90% of the feature contained on the site to be classified? (Multiple owners may apply together.) **AND**
 - Is the feature unique in Washington? **AND**
 - Can the feature be destroyed easily? **AND**
 - Can the feature be effectively protected in a natural area? **AND**
 - Has the site's eligibility been verified in writing by a qualified geologist?

OR,

- Is the feature included in the "Accretion Beach Inventory" by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation?

e. Historical Sites

- Is the site registered on a local, state or federal Register or Historic Places? (Note: open space classification applies to land value only.)

f. Private Recreation Areas

- Is the site devoted to facilities and equipment for recreational purposes? (Note: open space classification applies to land value only.) **AND**
- Does the site contain a recreational vehicle park? (Note: such sites are not eligible.)

g. Rural Open Space Close to Urban or Growth Areas

- Is the site 50 acres or larger, and located within two miles of an urban growth area designated by Thurston County? **AND**
- Is the site open to the public or does it qualify for receiving public access points described on Page 1 of the application form? (Note: If a membership fee is required for public access additional conditions apply; refer to the Thurston County Open Space Tax Program available at Thurston County Development Services.)

h. Significant Wildlife Habitat Areas

- Does the site contain "Class 1" wetlands identified by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Program? **AND**
- Do you have a Habitat Management Plan developed by a qualified wildlife habitat biologist, that you will agree in writing to follow, and that contains the following required elements:
 1. Land use limitations needed for the long-term viability of the important species or habitat;
 2. Limitations for access by humans and domestic animals, as needed;
 3. Management measures that will enhance the species' viability, if needed; and
 4. Recommended review intervals for at least the following twenty years?

OR,

- Does the site contain a stream, wetland, or other water body classified as a "Natural" Shoreline Environment by the Shoreline Master Program for the Thurston Region? **AND**
- If the water body is a stream or river, does the land contain at least five hundred feet of shoreline length; alternatively, if the water body is a pond or wetland, does the land contain at least one acre of wetland area? **AND**

- Is any contiguous upland area (defined as land outside the ordinary high water mark or any associated wetland or flood plain) limited to the equivalent of one acre per 100 feet of shoreline length, or four times the pond or wetland area? (Note: upland area beyond these limits is not eligible for classification and must be excluded) **AND**
- Is the land also eligible as Fish-Rearing Habitat for open space classification? (Note: land may not receive points in both categories.) **AND**
- Do you have a Habitat Management Plan developed by a qualified wildlife habitat biologist, that you will agree in writing to follow, and that contains the required elements listed above?

OR,

- Is the site within the “canyon”, “drainage ditch buffer”, or “associated wetland of Black Lake” as identified in the Percival Creek Corridor Plan of 1986? **AND**
- Do you have a Habitat Management Plan developed by a qualified wildlife habitat biologist, that you will agree in writing to follow, and that contains the required elements listed above?

OR,

- Does the site contain Class I wetlands regulated under the Thurston County Critical Areas Ordinance (TCC 17.15)? **AND**
- Do you have a Habitat Management Plan developed by a qualified wildlife habitat biologist, that you will agree in writing to follow, and that contains the required elements listed above? **AND**
- Has the Class I wetland been confirmed by either an appropriate state agency or a competent professional whose findings are substantiated by the appropriate state agency?

OR,

- Does the site contain important habitats or species regulated under the Thurston County Critical Areas Ordinance (TCC 17.15)? **AND**
- Do you have a Habitat Management Plan developed by a qualified wildlife habitat biologist, that you will agree in writing to follow, and that contains the required elements listed above? **AND**
- Has the important habitat or species site been confirmed by either an appropriate state agency or a competent professional whose findings are substantiated by the appropriate state agency?

i. Special Plant Sites

- Is the site included in the Natural Heritage Program database as the location of an endangered, threatened or sensitive species?

OR,

- Has a botanist or similar expert determined the site to be eligible for the Natural Heritage Program database? **AND**

- Has the Natural Heritage Program accepted the site for its database?

j. Urban or Growth Area Open Space

- Is the site 1 acre or larger? **AND**

- Is the site located within an urban growth boundary designated by Thurston County? **AND**

- Is the site open to the public or does it qualify for receiving public access points described on Page 1 of the application form? (Note: If a membership fee is required for public access additional conditions apply; refer to the Thurston County Open Space Tax Program available at Thurston County Development Services.)

MEDIUM PRIORITY RESOURCES (2 points each)

a. Public Land Buffers

- Is the site adjacent to a publicly-owned park, forest, wildlife preserve or natural area?

AND

- Is the site adjacent to the State Capitol Forest, Fort Lewis Military Reservation, any Indian Reservation, or the Snoqualmie National Forest? (Note: such sites are not eligible.)

b. Scenic Vista or Resources

- Is the site an historically open area in a region otherwise generally timbered, which is significant to the identity of a local area? **AND**

- Is the site of sufficient size to substantially preserve the scenic resource value?
AND

- Is the site at least 40 acres in size? **AND**
- Is the site visible to significant numbers of the general public from a public right-of-way?

OR,

- Is the area visible from a public right-of-way designated as scenic highway or byway by a local, state, or federal government agency; **AND**
- Is the site of sufficient size to substantially preserve the scenic resource value?
AND
- Is the site at least 40 acres in size?

LOW PRIORITY RESOURCES (1 point each)

a. Resource Enhancement

- Is the resource being enhanced eligible for open space classification; **AND**
- Do you have an enhancement plan developed in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and/or the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, which contains clear steps and timelines for completion?