

SELECTING A WETLANDS/STREAM CONSULTANT

Development proposals that involve disturbances within wetlands and/or streams or their associated buffers typically require specialized studies in order for the city to evaluate project impacts to these environmentally critical areas and assess the appropriate level of mitigation. The applicant is responsible to select consultants to perform such work. The city does not maintain a list of approved consultants, and staff cannot make verbal recommendations. There are a number of factors you should consider before hiring a wetlands or stream consultant. Be sure to ask the following questions before making your selection.

TRAINING

Does the consultant have a bachelor's degree or higher in Biology, Fisheries, Environmental Science, or related field and two years of related work experience?

Wetlands: Is the consultant trained in the use of the Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual and Regional Supplement? Is the consultant trained in the use of the Department of Ecology's Washington State Wetland Rating System? Does the consultant have additional training or expertise in wetland ecology, wetland plant species identification, hydric soils, or hydrology?

Streams: Is the consultant trained in doing streams surveys using current industry standards, methods, and procedures such as identifying the ordinary high water mark?

EXPERIENCE

How long has the consultant been doing wetlands/stream work? How much experience does the consultant have delineating wetlands in the field, assessing wetland functions and values, or working with wetland regulations? How much experience does the consultant have surveying stream systems in the Pacific Northwest? Has the consultant worked in Federal Way? Is the consultant familiar with the Environmentally Critical Areas chapter of the *Federal Way Revised Code* (FWRC)?

REFERENCES

Who were some of the consultant's past clients? Were they satisfied customers? Call them and find out who they worked with from the consulting firm and how they liked working with them. Ask them if there were any problems that occurred during or after the project, how the consultant handled those problems, and what the consultant charged for their work.

STAFF

Who will be working on your project? Will it be the principal consultant with years of experience or someone with less experience who works for the consultant? Know who you are hiring.

COST

How much will the consultant cost? Compare rates, but do not let cost be your only criteria. Be sure to consider training, experience, and the other factors as well.

PLEASE BE ADVISED

Projects that involve review of work proposed within environmentally critical areas may require that the city contract out for expert technical assistance with the review. Under FWRC 19.145.080, the city may require the applicant to provide any information, mapping, studies, materials, inspections, and/or reviews that are reasonably necessary to implement the environmentally critical areas regulations and have that information reviewed by the city's third party consultant at the applicant's expense. You will be advised at the earliest possible point if your project will be subject to these types of expenses.