

Currently there is no section in Board Manual or Rule that describes how to protect off-channel habitat. There are multiple places in the Board Manual that describe how to identify off-channel habitat. Below is a compilation of areas in the Manual that refer to off-channel habitat.

Section 2, Channel Migration Zones

Board Manual – 11/2004 Channel Migration Zones and Bankfull Channel Features

PART 1. BANKFULL CHANNEL FEATURES

If you determine no channel migration zone (CMZ) is present, the next step is to identify the bankfull width of the stream.

1.1 Background

Forest practices rule, WAC 222-16-010, provides the following definition for bankfull depth and width: “Bankfull depth” means the average vertical distance between the channel bed and the estimated water surface elevation required to completely fill the channel to a point above which water would enter the floodplain or intersect a terrace or hillslope. In cases where multiple channels exist, the bankfull depth is the average depth of all channels along the cross section.

“Bankfull width” means:

- For streams - the measurement of the lateral extent of the water surface elevation perpendicular to the channel at bankfull depth. In cases where multiple channels exist, bankfull width is the sum of the individual channel widths along the cross section.
- For lakes, ponds, and impoundments – line of mean high water.
- For tidal water – line of mean high tide.
- For periodically inundated areas of associated wetlands – line of periodic inundation, which will be found by examining the edge of inundation to ascertain where the presence and action of waters are so common and usual, and so long continued in all ordinary years, as to mark upon the soil a character distinct from that of the abutting upland.

If a CMZ is not present, measurement of the riparian management zone (RMZ) begins at the outer edge of the bankfull width. Guidance for measuring bankfull width and depth in this manual refers to a measurement of channel dimensions at bankfull flow and not for other parts of

the bankfull width definition: b) lakes, ponds, and impoundments; c) tidal water (tidally influenced channels); or d) periodically inundated areas of associated wetlands. See Board Manual Section 8 for guidance.

overflow channel:

A secondary channel on the floodplain that conveys water away from and/or back into the main channel. These channels can be continuous or interrupted in space in terms of channel dimensions and scour and fill. They often are a response to episodic flood scour and fill during floodplain inundation and drainage. They also can partially fill in between episodic flood events or become abandoned completely or be blocked by deposits of sediment or wood at their head. Overflow channels are typically at or above the range of bankfull flow elevations.

secondary channel:

Any channel on or in a floodplain that carries water (intermittently or

perennially in time; continuously or interrupted in space) away from, away from and back into, or along the main channel. Secondary channels include: side channels, wall-based channels, distributary channels, anabranch channels, abandoned channels, overflow channels, chutes, and swales

PART 2. TECHNICAL CRITERIA THAT IDENTIFY WETLANDS

Areas are determined to be wetlands if they satisfy (directly or indirectly) the minimum criteria standards for each of three parameters (hydrology, soils, *and* vegetation). “Criteria” are observations that in and of themselves are sufficiently conclusive to satisfy that a parameter is indicative of a wetland rather than non-wetland condition. The criteria are described specifically in Appendix A. If any one of the features described in Appendix A can be observed for each of all three parameters, it is mandatory that the site be called a wetland. In many cases, it will not be possible to observe features on a site that *directly* satisfy the criteria. However, other observable features - known as “field indicators” - may be used, and like circumstantial evidence, may make the case for wetland *indirectly*. Such interpretation of circumstantial evidence, or field indicators, is allowed within bounds of good professional judgment. Field indicators are discussed in Part 2.

Although vegetation is the most easily observed parameter, sole reliance on vegetation as the determinant of wetlands can be misleading. Many plant species tolerate a broad range of conditions enabling them to live successfully in both wetlands and non-wetlands, and hydrophytic vegetation may persist for decades following alteration of hydrology that renders a site a non-wetland. The criteria for hydrophytic vegetation is as follows:

If, under normal circumstances, more than 50 percent of the dominant species totaled from all vegetation strata are Obligate Wetland (OBL) Facultative Wetland (FACW) or Facultative (FAC).

Likewise, soils can be strong indicators of whether or not a site is a wetland when it is in an undrained landscape or in a hydrologically unaltered condition. While soils are excellent long-term integrators of all the ecological influences on a site including relative wetness, on hydrologically altered sites, they generally retain the morphological characteristics revealing their origin (i.e. having developed over geologic time in a wetland or in a non-wetland) long after site hydrology has been totally reversed.