

COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR WATER TYPING

WATER TYPE MAPS

- 1) What information is used to determine the water types identified on the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Water Type Maps?
 - a. The DNR Water Type Maps are updated via the Water Type Modification Form (WTMF) process. Various criteria are used to determine water types, such as bankfull width, stream slope gradient, drainage basin size, and fish-use versus non-fish-use. Natural permanent barriers are also used, if fish absence upstream is verified.
- 2) Should we be using WAC 222-16-030 or 222-16-031 to type water?
 - a. WAC 222-16-031 is to be used and/or followed to make on-site decisions related to water types. Water type maps designate type 1 – 5 waters as type S, F, Np, Ns for water types according to the water type conversion table in the rule.
- 3) Should we depend on using the water types on the DNR water type maps?
 - a. Water types should be field verified and typed by using physical criteria or through a protocol survey.
- 4) How do DNR Water Type Maps affect the operations of local governments?
 - a. Local governments have access to DNR maps and may choose to use them. The maps are only used as a starting point. Landowners are strongly encouraged to contact local governments with questions. DNR approves water types on forest land and does not have jurisdiction on properties that have been converted to non-forestry use.
- 5) What can be done to improve inaccuracies of DNR maps for streams?
 - a. Use the Water Type Modification Form (WTMF) process to permanently update water types on DNR maps.
- 6) Who do I talk with to clear up water typing questions?
 - a. Contact your local DNR region office.
- 7) Will DNR be able to use the information from the Forest Practices Application/Notification (FPA/N) to permanently change the DNR water typing map without an approved WTMF?
 - a. No, permanent updates to the water typing map can only be made through the WTMF process.
- 8) I have fish information. How do I get it included on the DNR maps? I have conducted surveys on my streams, how do I get the water types changed?
 - a. Submit the information along with a WTMF to your local DNR region office.

- 9) Can spatial data be submitted electronically?
- a. It may be accepted, contact your local DNR region office.

PROCESS

- 10) When is a WTMF required?
- a. It is not required for an FPA/N; however the WTMF is the only process to permanently update DNR water type maps.
- 11) Who reviews my WTMF?
- a. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Ecology (ECY), affected tribes and DNR make up the Water Type Review (WTR) Team. The WTR Team will review the WTMFs and conduct site visits as needed.
- 12) Who makes the final decision on the water type F/N break?
- a. The DNR makes the final decision on all water type changes. This occurs after the WTMF and survey data have been reviewed by the WTR Team consisting of WDFW, ECY, affected tribes and DNR.
- 13) What are the timelines for single and large projects?
- a. There is no regulatory timeline associated with a WTMF, thirty days is just a guideline. If an FPA/N decision is directly linked to a WTMF the two processes typically run concurrently. FPA/N's are disapproved if the WTMF process is unresolved by the final decision date of the FPA or if there is non-concurrence of the WTMF.
- 14) We work in several DNR regions and the process for handling WTMFs is different. How do we get consistency?
- a. Notify the regions and see if the issue can be rectified. The WTR Team process has been implemented to help standardize the review process.
- 15) Do I have to submit a WTMF with my FPA?
- a. No; however, you do need to show the actual field verified water types on your activity map and provide documentation regarding how water types were determined in the field. The water type classification worksheet found in the FPA/N instructions is strongly encouraged to be used as it can be very helpful in determining water types.
- 16) How can I have a stream type changed from a fish-bearing stream to a non-fish-bearing stream or vice-versa?
- a. See Forest Practices Board Manual Section 13 for acceptable survey methods and follow the WTMF process. Streams that have Type F physical characteristics are presumed to have fish unless a protocol survey or ID team has proven otherwise.

- 17) Can WTMFs be submitted to downgrade the water types of streams where previous WTMFs or historical assessments have established fish use?
- a. No. Once fish use is established, DNR will not accept downgrades.
- 18) What is a large project for water type modifications?
- a. Large projects are batches or groups of WTMFs. Board Manual Section 13 provides protocols for verifying fish use, which can be completed at any scale (i.e., by geographical area, watershed). After consultation with the WTR Team, a landowner can survey all or part of their property.
- 19) Is there an appeal process to a WTMF process?
- a. No, there is no direct appeal process. Forest Practices foresters, stakeholders and the proponent should seek resolution informally and locally with WTR Teams. However, if the WTMF is associated with an FPA/N, the approved or disapproved FPA/N can be appealed based on the water types.

PROTOCOL SURVEY

- 20) Is it true that I have to do a protocol survey to permanently change a water type on the DNR maps?
- a. A protocol survey is needed to identify the break point between Type F (fish-bearing) and Type N (non-fish-bearing). The WTMF is the document used to change a water type on DNR maps.
- 21) If I do a protocol survey, will that stand or do I have to do multiple protocol surveys during different survey seasons on the same stream?
- a. In most cases, a single, complete survey is all that is required. There are situations where multiple surveys may be recommended in order to adequately assess fish use (E.g., overwintering habitat, removal of man-made barriers, etc.) Consultation with DNR, WDFW and tribes prior to the survey season is strongly encouraged to achieve successful outcomes. See Board Manual Section 13 for protocol survey guidelines.
- 22) Can an Interdisciplinary (ID) Team be used to upgrade or downgrade a water type using an alternate protocol?
- a. Yes, an ID Team can be used to upgrade or downgrade a water type using an alternate protocol. The ID Team would include at least the landowner and the WTR Team. Parties may choose not to attend. The alternate protocol must first be established by the ID Team and then implemented. Availability of adequate background information/ data is strongly encouraged for assisting the ID Team including: known fish distribution in adjacent stream reaches (e.g., main stem

tributaries), known or suspected natural and/or man-made barriers downstream, historical disturbance, maps, pictures, channel features (e.g., pools, bankfull width, depth, etc.). Survey specifics and decisions must be well documented by the ID Team report.

- 23) Is the accepted window to conduct protocol surveys from March 1 to July 15th in any given year?
- a. Yes, March 1 to July 15th is the protocol survey window per Board Manual Section 13. However, due to complexities in anticipating when specific fish species will be seasonally active, it is recommended that you consult with WDFW and the local tribe(s) prior to the survey season to help determine the survey window(s) to help determine fish presence or absence.
- 24) How does drought affect changes to water types?
- a. On an annual basis DNR provides a *Fish Survey Season – Water Level and Streamflow Forecast*. If applicable, proponents of a water type change will need to provide information demonstrating how fish use determinations were unaffected by drought conditions and low stream flows.
- 25) What is adequate consultation and documentation for alternate protocols?
- a. An ID Team (i.e. WTR Team) would be organized to determine an appropriate alternate survey protocol and, in some cases, conduct the survey. Documentation would be on an Informal Conference Note including an attached ID Team announcement noting the landowner, tribe or agency representatives present, the alternate protocol method used, data collected, and the outcome.

GENERAL

- 26) Is there financial assistance to help determine water types?
- a. No.
- 27) Is the presence of freshwater mussels a sign of fish use?
- a. Yes. The presence of freshwater mussels implies that shocking is not necessary because fish would (or should) be present since the mussels are transported by fish and deposited in the streams.
- 28) What is DNR's role for WTMFs on non-forest land?
- a. DNR has agreed to change the maps on non-forest land. However, DNR's review priority is on forest land subject to the Forest Practices rules.

- 29) What are the steps that I should use to determine the water type of a stream in the field?
- a. Identify the stream channel gradient and the bankfull width (see Board Manual Section 2) of streams in your proposal areas and read the descriptions of each water type (WAC 222-16-031). Board Manual Section 13 may also be used to determine fish use. If you are having trouble identifying the average bankfull width of a stream, please contact a Forest Practices forester for assistance. The Water Type Classification Worksheet in the forest practices application/notification is a very helpful tool.