

WATER TYPE MODIFICATION FORM REVIEW PROCESS

IMPORTANT NOTE: Landowners/surveyors should consult with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) area habitat biologists and affected tribe(s) prior to surveying in streams larger than 5 feet bankfull width (see Forest Practices Board Manual Section 13 for more information).

Recommendations for a successful and timely water type modification process include but are not limited to:

1. *Early involvement of the Water Type Review (WTR) Team (work directly with your area forest practices forester to initiate WTR Team involvement).* Prior to the project season, consultation with the WTR Team should occur regarding planned surveys. This will allow a clear understanding of process and expectations between the parties involved, increase probability of Water Type Modification Form (WTMF) approval, save survey time and money spent. Consultation meetings should be well documented by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on an Informal Conference Note.
2. *Packaging and timing of submitted information for review.* Be committed to a review period that allows adequate time for verification of proposed changes on the ground. Submitting large batches of proposed changes can create a logistical problem to those who review the products. Even flow of work products from the proponent allows for reviews to be integrated into the other duties of the WTR Teams. Submission scheduling should be addressed at the pre-season WTR Team consultation meeting.
3. *Technical Reviews or interdisciplinary (ID) Teams may occur as a result of receiving large batches of WTMFs or when a WTMF proposes a downgrade of a Type F water.* Proponents, as well as their consultants, should be prepared to meet with representatives from affected tribes, WDFW, Department of Ecology (ECY), and DNR to answer questions regarding the proposed changes. This is intended to be an opportunity to exchange/gather information to help the reviewers reach a decision on the proposed WTMF. The WTR Team members should also prepare for the meeting by reviewing the WTMF and any available supporting documentation.
4. *Provide data supporting water type changes in the packaged proposals.* Be committed to provide complete information on the WTMF and additional supporting data when available or when asked for it. The intent of all parties is to clearly understand the justification for what changes are proposed for a given stream segment. Below are some suggestions.

- a. Communication should occur often enough to avoid surprises to the landowner, consultant or the WTR Team.
- b. Contact WDFW and/or the tribe(s) for technical questions and guidance to move the process forward.
- c. Landowners should prioritize watersheds or stream segments for review by the WTR Team, this is especially important for large batches of proposals. Obtain the DNR WTMF number assigned to each WTMF from the DNR region office for easier reference for all parties.
- d. Provide additional descriptive data/information (e.g., fish density estimates, natural barrier measurements, etc.) to support fish use decisions during the review process. See the WTMF instructions for more information.
- e. Mark on the ground, stream channel features which are associated with fish use determinations. GPS coordinates, flagging, or tags are very helpful.
- f. All WTR Team participants can submit information on water types to the local DNR region office.
- g. Check for man-made barriers below the surveyed stream reach.
- h. Consult with a local fish biologist for any other information that may be useful.

The following items are common issues that may result in disapproval of a WTMF and therefore can benefit from pre-submittal consultation with the WTR Team. When any of these issues are associated with a WTMF, additional information will likely be requested from reviewers.

1. Low gradient stream reaches that lie upstream of potential natural barriers.
2. Establishment of the end of fish use downstream of a natural barrier which is less than a 12 foot vertical drop (i.e. falls consisting of a bedrock drop with no steps). Bedrock chutes may also constitute a natural barrier, depending on their length and drop. In general, protocol surveys start at a potential natural barrier and continue upstream for ¼ mile to verify that the natural barrier stops fish use and to determine resident fish presence or absence.
3. Use of wood step or log jams for fish passage barrier – these features may only be a temporary barrier to fish access/presence.
4. Establishment of the end of fish use upstream of a man-made barrier or above a man-made barrier recently removed.
5. Surveying for fish in lakes, ponds, or wetlands.
6. Surveying for fish by electro-fishing in a downstream rather than upstream direction. This approach can push fish downstream.

7. Submitting stream survey data from past electro-fishing, watershed analyses or prior to July 2001 when the fish definition did not include sculpin or lamprey.
8. Surveying for fish where mass wasting events or other disturbances have occurred (Landowners/surveyors must document how such factors affect fish distribution in the stream system – see Board Manual Section 13 for more information).
9. Proposing the end of fish presence where last fish was detected without taking into account stream physical characteristics that may influence the upward movement of fish.
10. Surveying for fish when drought conditions exist (Landowners/surveyors are required to provide information demonstrating how stream flows and fish use determinations were unaffected by drought conditions – see Board Manual Section 13 for more information).