

**Interim Riparian Buffer Recommendations for Streams in Puget Sound Agricultural Landscapes**

**November 2012**

**(Originally proposed as federal Option 3 for the  
Agriculture Fish and Water (AFW) Process, March 2002)**

| <b>Channel Type</b>                                                                                                                | <b>Habitat Functions</b>                                              | <b>Composition</b>                                                                          | <b>Buffer Width</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Class I</b><br>Constructed ditches;<br>small non-fish<br>bearing streams                                                        | Water quality<br>protection; shade;<br>sediment filtration            | Grasses, trees or<br>shrubs; may only<br>need woody<br>vegetation on one<br>side of channel | As wide as<br>necessary to meet<br>water quality<br>standards; can be<br>determined by<br>NRCS Field Office<br>Technical Guide<br>(FOTG) | Channels<br>constructed for<br>purpose of<br>draining<br>farmland. If<br>dredged,<br>dredging<br>should occur<br>when fish are<br>absent or at<br>lowest<br>densities |
| <b>Class II</b><br>Fish bearing<br>streams; natural and<br>modified natural<br>watercourses that<br>are incised and<br>cannot move | Water quality;<br>LWD for cover,<br>complexity; litter<br>fall; shade | Site potential<br>vegetation; trees<br>where they<br>will grow                              | 2/3 Site potential<br>tree height; 50 ft.<br>minimum to 180 ft.<br>maximum                                                               | Portions of<br>natural<br>watercourses<br>that can no<br>longer migrate<br>laterally                                                                                  |
| <b>Class III</b><br>Fish bearing; natural<br>unconfined channels                                                                   | Same as above,<br>but structural<br>LWD essential                     | Same as above                                                                               | 3/4 Site potential<br>tree height                                                                                                        | Highly<br>desirable to<br>buffer entire<br>channel<br>migration zone<br>(CMZ)                                                                                         |
| <b>Class IV</b><br>fish bearing streams<br>confined by dikes or<br>other hardened man-<br>made feature                             | Water quality;<br>complex cover;<br>litter fall; shade                | Trees and shrubs                                                                            | Face of levee, from<br>top of dike to<br>Ordinary High<br>Water (OHW)<br>mark                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Class V</b><br>Fish bearing<br>intertidal and<br>estuarine streams<br>and channels                                              | Water quality;<br>food inputs; habitat<br>complexity                  | Site potential<br>vegetation (salt-<br>tolerant sedges,<br>shrubs, trees)                   | 35-75 ft.; varies<br>according to<br>adjacent land use                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                       |