



Community Development Department

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Natural Floodplain Functions

Our floodplains and riparian areas are not just a location for flood problems. They also perform some very **valuable natural functions**.

Probably the most important natural function of the area's floodplains is to provide **habitat** for aquatic species. Unfortunately, aquatic species in the Chehalis River Basin are significantly diminished from their historic level. Salmon habitat in the Basin already is degraded by 44%–78%, depending on the species. Other species, like Oregon Spotted Frog, could soon be listed under the Endangered Species Act.



To see what species live in your immediate area, checkout the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) map <http://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/phsontheweb/>

Other areas important to many species' habitat are **wetlands**. They also help attenuate flooding by storing floodwaters. Click [here](#) to see a map of your wetlands.



The City of Chehalis enforces several regulatory approaches to protect floodplain habitats. In addition to floodplain regulations that discourage development, the City regulates stream buffers – areas within a certain distance of a channel. A map of these areas is [here](#).

Don't damage habitat or any of the valuable natural floodplain functions. Call the Community Development Department at (360)345-2229 before you dig, fill, grade, or build. We can tell you if you're in a floodplain, buffer zone, or other critical area and what rules are in effect.

The City also participates in the [Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority](#), which is developing an aquatic species habitat restoration program.