



WELLS Archaeological/Historic and Critical Area Requirements

Community Development & Planning
(360) 378-2354

Siting new wells

Prior to siting a new well site, Community Development & Planning should be contacted to obtain an archaeological and critical area site review to ensure compliance with the archaeological/historic regulations in SJCC 18.50.050 and 18.60.210 and the critical area regulations in San Juan County Code 18.30.110 - .160. Staff can assist you with a review of the cultural and critical area maps to ensure that a compliant well site is located. Community Well Site Inspection applications and Individual Well Site Inspection Report Variance requests submitted to San Juan County Health and Community Services will be transmitted to the CD&P for cultural and critical area review unless advance site approval has been obtained from CD&P.

Critical area review

Critical area review should be completed to ensure compliance with regulations that affect the following areas:

- Critical Aquifer recharge area - all County
- Frequently flooded areas
- 200 feet from a geologically hazardous area
- 300 feet from a wetland
- 200 feet from a fish and wildlife habitat conservation area (FWHCA)
- 1,000 feet from a golden eagle nest, ¼ mile from a peregrine falcon or great heron nest, and 1,640 feet from western toad habitat

New wells are prohibited in wetlands and aquatic FWHCAs

Effective March 31, 2014, new wells are not permitted to be located within wetlands (see SJCC 18.30.150 Table 3.5 Structures, Uses and Activities Allowed in Wetlands and Wetland Buffers) or Aquatic FWHCAs (see SJCC 18.30.160 Table 3.8 Structures, Uses and Activities Allowed in and over Aquatic FWHCAs and Their Water Quality Buffers.) FWHCAs include certain marine waters, naturally occurring ponds and lakes and streams.

New wells in critical area buffers

Drilling and digging of wells in wetland water quality and habitat buffers and aquatic FWHCA buffers is permitted provided:

- they are located within the outer 25% of buffers;
- there are no anticipated adverse impacts to adjoining wetlands;
- measures are taken to avoid compaction of soils during drilling and development of the well; and
- that disturbed areas are immediately stabilized and replanted with the type of vegetation found in the buffer.

New wells may be installed in Zone 2 of an aquatic FWHCA Tree protection Zone to support the development of one primary structure as long as they remain outside of any required water quality buffer.

Operation, maintenance, repair, remodel, or replacement of existing wells

SJCC 18.30.110.C.2 exempts (from the critical area regulations) the operation, maintenance, repair, remodel, or replacement of existing structures, facilities, infrastructure systems, development areas (see the definition for development area at the end of this bulletin) and uses, provided:

- there is no further intrusion into geologically hazardous areas, frequently flooded areas, wetlands, or fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas or their buffers;
- soil erosion is controlled; disturbed areas are promptly stabilized; and
- actions do not have an additional adverse effect on the functions and values of critical areas.

Existing structures, uses and activities located within shorelines of the state may either comply with the critical area regulations or the shoreline management requirements that require demonstration of SJCC 18.30.110(B) and 18.30.160.

Determining if there are adverse impacts to critical areas

An assessment of the potential adverse impacts should include (at a minimum) an assessment of any increase water flow or pollutant transport to the critical area, effects of vegetation removal on the food web, the overall effects on protected plants, animals or habitats of local importance and shoreline effects (e.g. substrate size/habitat quality).

Development area

SJCC 18.20.040 defines development area as the area that is directly altered as a result of development. This includes, but is not limited to, the area containing structures, driveways, gardens, landscaped areas, areas of grading, excavation, or fill.