



Department Policy & Procedure

Subject: Wildlife Sanctuary Designation	Number 060-P 5.10.1
	Effective September 1, 2009
	Supersedes
Approved: 	Department: Parks & Recreation
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1.0 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to state Seattle Parks and Recreation commitment to preserving and nurturing wildlife within our urban environment and to put in place a mechanism to continue, and increase, wildlife and habitat protection and enhancement efforts within parks. It is also intended to support public education, volunteer involvement with stewardship of parks, promote consistency in Department actions related to wildlife and habitat protection and enhance interdepartmental and interagency cooperation in these efforts.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

- 2.1 Department of Parks and Recreation
- 2.2 Seattle Public Utilities Department
- 2.3 Department of Planning and Development
- 2.4 Other City departments on a case by case basis

3.0 POLICY

Seattle Parks and Recreation values healthy and diverse wildlife in the city of Seattle and is committed to supporting the sustainability of habitat for a wide variety of wildlife within the property it owns and manages. Seattle Parks and Recreation recognizes that the designation of Wildlife Sanctuaries is an important mechanism to ensure that important habitat is identified, documented, and preserved to support native animal species that are in particular danger, by bringing together maintenance practices, educational opportunities and important volunteer efforts.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Wildlife Sanctuary: A designated geographic area that serves as habitat for one or more Endangered, Threatened, Priority Species, Local Species with declining populations and/or Species of Concern as described in this document. The major theme in such areas is to conserve, protect and enhance wildlife habitat in Parks.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the Natural Resources Management Unit, to oversee and carry out this policy. Department staff will recommend appropriate actions to the Superintendent including establishing additional restrictions within a Wildlife Sanctuary if needed to protect the wildlife and/or the habitat.
- 5.2 The Superintendent may establish additional restrictions, based on scientific information, levels of protection or other actions he determines are necessary in order to protect, restore or enhance the Wildlife Sanctuary.
- 5.3 The Planning and Development Division will be responsible for updating pertinent department-wide plans and specific park development plans to reflect a Wildlife Sanctuary designation.
- 5.4 The Department will promote interdepartmental and interagency cooperation to protect Wildlife Sanctuaries.

6.0 PROCEDURE

- 6.1 The Superintendent on an annual basis shall accept and consider nominations for areas to be designated as a Wildlife Sanctuary. These will consist of property owned by Department of Parks and Recreation and that provide habitat for one or more Priority Species and/or Species of Concern, or local species of importance with declining populations defined as:
- a. Local populations of native animal, bird or other species that are in danger of extinction or likely to be endangered as identified in the federal Endangered Species Act; or
 - b. Local populations of native animal, bird or other species whose continued existence in the state and their sensitivity to habitat alteration is of priority or concern as identified by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) ; or
 - c. Local populations of native animal, bird or other species of local importance that may have declining populations (based on peer reviewed scientific research), yet are not listed by state or federal governments for protection, and those that are especially valued by Seattle's citizens as symbolic of the Pacific Northwest.
- 6.2 Nominations shall be in writing, address the criteria listed in section 6.1, clearly define the geographic area that is being nominated, and include any planned or desired habitat restoration or management activities.

- 6.3 The Superintendent shall review the nomination and make the decision to approve or deny the request based on:
 - a. Whether the nomination meets the criteria listed in section 6.1.
 - b. How compelling a case was made using the criteria listed in section 6.1.
 - c. Planned or desired restoration activities comply with departmental policies and best management practices, and all applicable laws.
 - d. Availability of resources needed to establish, maintain and manage the proposed Wildlife Sanctuary.
- 6.4 If the request is approved, the Superintendent will authorize and approve a site-specific Wildlife Sanctuary Habitat plan developed by Department staff from the Natural Resources Management Unit, in collaboration with staff from other City departments, along with outside organizations who have expertise in wildlife and habitat management, and appropriate stakeholders, including the individual(s)/group(s) submitting the Wildlife Sanctuary nomination.
- 6.5 Site-specific Wildlife Sanctuary Habitat plans must:
 - a. Provide direction and recommend strategies for implementing the plan and evaluating requested short and long-term changes to the designated Wildlife Sanctuary.
 - b. Propose strategies to address habitat restoration and/or habitat and species management strategies critical to the well-being of the designated Wildlife Sanctuary.
 - c. Evaluate any anticipated impacts to the nominated area and/or surrounding areas including possible impacts from established current and/or future designated use within the Sanctuary.
- 6.6 The Department will promote wildlife habitat and environmental education related to Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- 6.7 The Department will promote volunteer stewardship in the protection and enhancement of Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- 6.8 Should a Wildlife Sanctuary designation be approved, corresponding revisions will be completed on Park comprehensive plans, Park master plans, Park vegetation management plans and other applicable plans.
- 6.9 The Superintendent may make the decision to withdraw a Wildlife Sanctuary designation if there is a significant change(s) in the habitat within the area designated as a Wildlife Sanctuary, resulting in a determination, supported by scientific information, that the habitat is no longer considered to be a high quality habitat or habitat with a high potential to recover to suitable quality within realistic resources and efforts.
 - a. Wildlife surveys will not be used in determining whether to withdraw a Wildlife Sanctuary designation. It is not uncommon for animals that have

abandoned a site to return if there is quality habitat. There can also be successful efforts in reintroducing species that have abandoned a site for long periods of time.

- b. The Department will not withdraw a Wildlife Sanctuary designation solely for the purpose of converting the designated site to another use.
- c. Prior to considering a withdrawal of a Wildlife Sanctuary designation, a careful review of the Habitat plan will be conducted to determine if changes to the site plan could provide a feasible alternative to the withdrawal of the Wildlife Sanctuary designation.
- d. The Department will notify the public of the intent to withdraw a Wildlife Sanctuary designation and will provide the public with an opportunity to comment.
- e. Should a Wildlife Sanctuary designation be withdrawn, corresponding revisions will be completed on Park comprehensive plans, Park master plans, Park vegetation management plans and other applicable plans.

7.0 REFERENCES

- 7.1 2000 Seattle Parks and Recreation Urban Wildlife and Habitat Management Plan www.cityofseattle.net/Parks/Publication/urbanwildlife.htm
- 7.2 2005 Department of Parks and Recreation Best Management Practice Manual, Chapter 5. www.cityofseattle.net/parks/projects/bmp.htm
- 7.3 SMC 18.12.030 A9, 10 Park Code definition of “Park” and “Park Rule”
- 7.4 SMC 18.12.040 Park Code – Superintendent’s Authority
- 7.5 SMC 25.09.20 D – Environmentally critical areas definitions
- 7.6 Park Policy 5.6.1 – Tree Management www.cityofseattle.net/Parks/horticulture/treemaintenance.htm
- 7.7 2007 Seattle’s Urban Forest Management Plan www.seattle.gov/environment/documents/Final_UFMP.pdf
- 7.8 Seattle Parks and Recreation Strategic Action Plan: 2009 – 2013, Goal 1 B.4 – Wildlife Sanctuaries