

**Interpretation RE: Title 21A.12.170 of the ISDC**  
**Setbacks & Overhangs v. Eaves**

**The question:**

Can an eave extend more than normally allowed into a street setback (per ISDC 21A.12.170 D), if associated with an overhang, provided that the eave does not extend into the street setback more than the maximum allowed for the overhang (per ISDC 21A.12.170 A)?

**Context:**

Three lots in the Redhawk subdivision (lots 7, 8, & 12) are corner lots and are significantly constrained by street setbacks. The builder of lots 7, 8 & 12 is interested in building a 24" overhang into the street setback; he has requested that he be allowed to construct 6" eaves past the overhang. He noted that the code allowed for 30" overhangs into the street setback, but only allowed for 24" eaves; the builder further noted that ending the eaves at 24" flush with the edge of his overhang would not provide appropriate roof drainage.

**Interpretation:**

The code allows for certain types of overhangs (e.g bay windows, stairs, fireplaces) to intrude 30" into the street setback but only allows for eaves to extend 24" into the street setback.

Provided that the eaves in question are associated with a permitted overhang (per ISDC 21A.12.170A) the eaves may extend up to 30" into a street setback. For example, an 18" overhang can have 12" eaves, such that the total intrusion into the street setback is 30".

**Applicable Sections:**

**ISDC 21A.12.170 A**

"Fireplace structures, bay or garden windows, enclosed stair landings, closets, or similar structures may project into any setback, provide such projections are:

1. Limited to two per façade;
2. Not wider than ten feet; and
3. Not more than twenty-four inches into an interior setback or thirty inches into a street setback;..."

**ISDC 21A.12.170 D**

"Eaves may not project more than:

1. Eighteen inches into an interior setback,
2. Twenty-four inches into a street setback, or
3. Eighteen inches across a lot line in a zero-lot-line development;..."

  
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Ray Gilmore, Community Development Director

  
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Date

**Interpretation RE: Title 21A.15.1415 of the SMC**  
**Wetland Ratings**

**The Question:**

According to Title 21A.15.1415, wetlands shall be rated according to the *Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western Washington* (Department of Ecology 2004, or as revised). This document contains the definitions, methods and a rating form for determining the categorization of wetlands. The document includes criteria for limited use of dual ratings when a wetland contains only a small area of bog or forest. Will dual wetland ratings be allowed in the City of Sammamish and, if so, how will "small area of bog or forest" be defined in these circumstances?

**Context:**

Applying a dual rating to a wetland would result in different buffer and mitigation requirements being applicable to different segments of a singular wetland. Dual ratings would be problematic to administer in the City of Sammamish, in particular because eleven wetlands with bog components have been mapped within the City's urban growth boundaries. Defining what a "small area of bog" is would be subjective and consequently difficult. Furthermore, allowing dual ratings could result in reduced buffering protections for these valuable and sensitive ecosystems.


Bogs are unique wetland resources that were formed shortly after the retreat of the glaciers and could be viewed as some of the most ancient living ecosystems in the Northwest. These ecosystems are also very valuable because, perhaps more than any other wetland type, bog wetlands act as sponges, soaking up rainwater during winter wet seasons, moderating flood pulses and providing a slower water release to downstream flows through summer dry seasons. Bogs also act as carbon and nutrient sinks, storing the organic production of centuries while at the same time arresting the decomposition of that material (Kulzer, et al. 2001).

It is especially important to protect these valuable bog wetland systems because these systems are very sensitive to the effects of urbanization. Urbanization can significantly impact these ecosystems by causing changes in water levels, nutrient and mineral enrichment, increased bacterial populations and establishment of invasive species. Increased development within the watersheds of these systems can affect the amount, quantity and quality of surface water and groundwater input into these systems, potentially altering water chemistry in the bog which can lead to loss of the flora and fauna that make bog ecosystems so unique. Further, significant stormwater inputs can destabilize a bog by changing the water chemistry such that the rate of decomposition in the bog is increased, causing the bog to release the ancient store of nutrients that would otherwise be retained. When bog systems break down, long-stored nutrients are released and can overwhelm receiving bodies lower in the watershed (Kulzer, et al. 2001).

Studies suggest that avoiding conditions that increase water level fluctuation or alter water chemistry within bogs are the most important ways to avoid bog impacts. Best available science also suggests that preserving surrounding forest cover can play a crucial role in protecting and maintaining stable hydrology in a bog. Consequently, best available science suggests that required buffers for wetlands with bog components be large (WSDOE, 2004). Allowing dual wetland classifications could reduce buffer protections below acceptable levels such that these unique and sensitive ecosystems are further destabilized and eventually lost.

**Interpretation:**

For the purpose of determining wetland ratings and applicable required regulatory buffer widths, wetland rating according to the *Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western Washington* (Department of Ecology 2004, or as revised) means using this methodology to determine a singular rating for each wetland. In order to provide protection to our most sensitive bog wetland systems, dual ratings of wetlands will not be allowed in the City of Sammamish.

  
Kamuron Gurol, Community Development Director

5/10/06  
Date

**References Cited:**

Kulzer, L., S. Luchessa, S. Cooke, R. Errington, and F. Weinmann, 2001. Characteristics of the Low-Elevation Sphagnum-Dominated Peatlands of Western Washington: A Community Profile. 15 pp.

Washington State Department of Ecology, 2004. Wetlands in Washington State Volume 2: Managing and Protecting Wetlands. Washington State Department of Ecology Publication #04-06-024.