




County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 13, 2020

TO: SDID Plan Review Staff

FROM: Bruce McGranahan, Director, SDID 

SUBJECT: RPA Delineation Review Guidelines for Non-Bonded Lot Grading Plans

The following guidelines provide information to Site Development and Inspections Division (SDID) reviewers for evaluating plans of development where Resource Protection Area (RPA) boundaries are depicted, further detailing how the process outlined by [Technical Bulletin 08-12](#) is administered in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance, [Chapter 118 of the Code of Fairfax County](#).

- 1) Review Fairfax County's adopted Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas Map, preferably via the Geographic Exploration and Mapping ([GEM](#)) application, as hard copy is not current. Identify the site (property) for the proposed development plan.
- 2) Verify the limits of major floodplain (FP) and RPA on the map and its proximity to the site (property).

Major floodplain is a floodplain with a drainage area of 360 acres or more. The county adopted map displays the general locations of RPA boundaries for planning purposes. The map may be used as a guide to identify the general presence and location of regulated areas. The limit of perennial streams, however, is adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

- 3) Decide whether a site-specific RPA delineation is required.

If there is county-adopted RPA on the site or within the vicinity of the site, a site-specific RPA delineation is required. If you need assistance in determining whether a site-specific RPA delineation is required, please contact a Stormwater Specialist or Branch Chief based on the associated magisterial district of the project.

Note: Often, the submitting engineer has contacted one of the Stormwater Specialists, ahead of formal plan submission, to obtain clarification as to whether a site-specific delineation will be required for the proposed project. Staff is encouraged to coordinate internally in making a final determination, when/as needed.



- 4) If a site-specific RPA delineation is required, check whether the field-verified RPA limits are shown on the plan.
- 5) If a site-specific RPA delineation is required and not provided, reject the plan and request field verification and proper certification accordingly.
- 6) If a site-specific RPA delineation is provided within the plan, refer to the following procedure:
 - a) Check for the completed RPA Boundary Location Certification (See [Technical Bulletin 08-12](#)).
 - b) Verify the core components of the RPA, as listed under County Code [Sec.118-1-7\(b\)](#):
 - i) A tidal wetland (wetland that is inundated by tidal waters);
 - ii) A tidal shore (land contiguous to a tidal body of water between the mean low water level and mean high water level, [Sec. 118-1-6\(aa\)](#));
 - iii) A water body with perennial flow;
 - iv) A nontidal wetland connected by surface flow and contiguous to a tidal wetland or water body with perennial flow;
 - v) A buffer area as follows:
 - (1) Any land within a major floodplain;
 - (2) Any land within 100 feet of a feature listed in 1 – 4 above.

Note: If there is a mild slope present (less than 5%) and hydric soil, there is a potential for wetlands. See the [Potential Wetlands Area Map](#) as an additional resource for identifying potential wetland areas.

7. Identify the following on the plan:
 - a) Banks of water bodies with perennial flow (streams/lakes);
 - b) 100-foot buffer from top of bank/edge of the landward component of the RPA;
 - c) Approved 100-year major FP limits;
 - d) Field-verified RPA boundary;
 - e) County-adopted RPA boundary.
8. Use one of the following methods to verify the accuracy of the site-specific RPA delineation:
 1. **Case I (most common): Presence of Perennial Water Body; No Tidal Wetland, No Tidal Shore, No Contiguous, Non-Tidal Wetland.**
 - a. If the 100-year major FP limit exceeds the 100-foot buffer, then the 100-year major FP limit will constitute the RPA limit.
 - b. If the 100-year major FP is within the 100-foot buffer, then the 100-foot buffer will constitute the RPA limit.

2. **Case II: Presence of Perennial Water Body and Wetland.**

- a. Presence of contiguous non-tidal wetland, no tidal wetland, or no tidal shore.
 - i. If the 100-year major FP limit exceeds the 100-foot buffer from the edge of contiguous wetlands, then the 100-year major FP limit will constitute the RPA limit.
 - ii. If the 100-year major FP limit is within the 100-foot buffer from the edge of the contiguous wetlands, then the 100-foot buffer from the edge of the wetland will constitute the RPA limit.
- b. Presence of tidal shore, tidal wetland, and non-tidal wetland contiguous to tidal wetland.
 - i. If the 100-year major FP limit exceeds the 100-foot buffer from the edge of contiguous wetlands, then the 100-year major FP limit will constitute the RPA limit.
 - ii. If the 100-year major FP limit is within the 100-foot buffer from the edge of the contiguous wetlands, then the 100-foot buffer from the edge of the wetland will constitute the RPA limit.
- c. Presence of tidal shore, tidal wetland, and no contiguous non-tidal wetland.
 - i. If the 100-year major FP exceeds the 100-foot buffer from the edge of tidal wetland, then the 100-year major FP will constitute the RPA limit.
 - ii. If the 100-year major FP limit is within the 100-foot buffer from the edge of the tidal wetland, then the 100-foot buffer from the edge of the wetland will constitute the RPA limit.

Non-bonded lot grading plans will not require jurisdictional determinations or verification letters from the United States Army Corps of Engineers for all waters and wetlands of the United States, however, if there are contiguous tidal or non-tidal wetlands on the site, they have to be properly delineated by a wetland scientist or expert following the standard.

If a reviewer has any questions regarding the above guidance, or any other questions pertaining to the RPA/floodplain review component, they should contact a Stormwater Specialist or Branch Chief based on the associated magisterial district of the proposed project.

For assistance with the connection/contiguity of any associated wetland or ponds to perennial water bodies or other RPA-related issues, staff should contact the Watershed Assessment Branch Manager of the Stormwater Planning Division, within the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.