

# BLUFF FACTSHEET



## **Bluff Impact Zone**

A bluff and the land located within 30 feet of the top and toe of a bluff. A bluff impact zone is established for preservation and management of shoreland vegetation and soils, and all structural development is excluded from this zone, except for stairways, lifts and landings. Preserving and maintaining vegetation can protect soils, screen development, and maintain the natural appearance of bluff areas.

## **Toe of the Bluff**

The point at the bottom of a bluff that is the lower end of a ten (10) foot segment with an average slope of eighteen (18) percent or is the OHWL, whichever is higher. This shall be used for the purpose of measuring setbacks.

## **Top of the Bluff**

The point at the upper end of a bluff that is the higher end of a ten (10) foot segment with an average slope of eighteen (18) percent. This shall be used for the purpose of measuring setbacks.

## **Steep Slopes**

Lands having average slopes over twelve (12) percent, as measured over horizontal distances of fifty (50) feet or more, that are not bluffs. Generally, this is land where agricultural activity or development is either not recommended or described as poorly suited due to slope steepness and the site's soil characteristics, as mapped and described in available County Soil Surveys or other technical reports, unless appropriate design and construction techniques and farming practices are used in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

## **Ordinance requirements**

Article 11.21 D: Dirt moving in a bluff impact zone is prohibited, except for the placement of stairways, lifts, or landings permitted under Article 11.9. Dirt moving on steep slopes may be permitted with a stormwater and erosion control plan approved by the department as well as an approved Shoreland Alteration Permit (if in the Shoreland District).

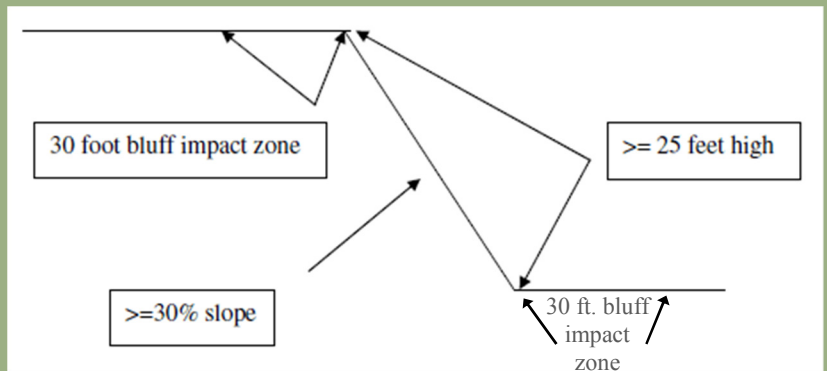
Article 11.20 E: Vegetative buffer consisting of trees, shrubs, and ground cover plants and understory in a natural state is required in bluff impact zones and on areas with slopes greater than 25%. Vegetation clearing and removal of ground cover is not allowed, except for the removal of vegetation necessary to accommodate the placement of a stairway and associated landing, lift, or access path, not to exceed 8 feet in width. Removal of dead/diseased trees or branches that pose a safety hazard is allowed.

Article 11.9: Stairways and lifts are the preferred alternative to major topographic alterations for achieving access up and down bluffs and steep slopes to shore areas. Stairways and lifts shall not exceed four feet in width on residential lots. Up to eight foot wide stairways may be permitted on water-oriented commercial lots. Landings cannot exceed 32 sq. ft. in area (64 sq. ft. for commercial). Stairways must be screened from the lake as much as possible and erosion must be prevented.

## **What is a bluff?**

A topographical feature such as a hill, cliff, or embankment having all of the following characteristics:

- Part or all of the feature is located in a **Shoreland** area
- The slope rises at least **25 feet** above the toe of the bluff
- The grade of the slope from the toe of the bluff to the top of the bluff averages **30%** or greater
- The slope drains toward the water body



**The 30 ft. bluff impact zone (BIZ) applies to the top and toe of a bluff**

**Wondering if you have a bluff??? You can hire a land surveyor or contact Land Services staff @ (218) 824-1010.**