Buffer Standards (revised 12/12/2024 per 12/11/2024 PSC meeting discussion; revised 12/30/2024 per 12/18/2024 TAC meeting discussion) Yellow highlight = added as result of TAC input

Stream Buffer Standards

City/watershed	Stream Buffer Trigger	Stream Buffer Width
BCWMC current standard **See Appendix B of the BCWMC Requirements more details**	*Projects that will result in more than 200 cubic yards of cut or fill, or more than 10,000 square feet of land disturbance*	*At least 10 feet or 25 percent of the distance between the ordinary high water level and the nearest existing structure, whichever is less*
BCWMC Staff Recommendation	Revise to match (exactly) the trigger for erosion and sediment control requirements: Projects that will result in 200 cubic yards or more of cut or fill, or 10,000 square feet or more of land disturbance Keep current allowed exemptions from the BCWMC buffer requirements: • Public recreational facilities adjacent to the feature (e.g. trails, stairways, and docks) up to 20 feet in width will be allowed, with that width being added to the required buffer width. • Minimally improved areas within the buffer for private access to the feature will be allowed (e.g. wood chip trails, stairways, and docks). Also note: A perpendicular access to the feature is allowed up to 20 feet in width or 20 percent of the lot width, whichever is more restrictive.	Revise to: 30 feet average and 20 feet minimum (measured from ordinary high water level) For individual single family homes – keep buffer requirement as current standard: At least 10 feet or 25 percent of the distance between the ordinary high water level and the nearest existing structure, whichever is less. Staff recommends the BCWMC's stream buffer requirements allow cities to accept narrower buffer strips in certain situations, on a case-by-case basis, similar to SCWMC's "Alternate Buffer Strips" standard. (See sidebar) Narrower buffer strips would be allowed (e.g., minimum 10 feet) based on individual site conditions such as: parcel size, roads/utilities, or undue hardship

SCWMC's alternative buffer strip standards:

6. ALTERNATE [sic] BUFFER STRIPS.

(a) Because of unique physical characteristics of a specific parcel, narrower buffer strips may be necessary to allow a reasonable use of the parcel, based on an assessment of:

(1) The size of the parcel.

(2) Existing roads and utilities on the parcel.

(3) The percentage of the parcel covered by watercourses or wetlands.

(4) The configuration of the watercourses or wetlands on the parcel.

(5) The quality of the affected watercourses and wetlands.

(6) Any undue hardship that would arise from not allowing the alternative buffer strip.

(b) The use of alternative buffer strips will be evaluated as part of the review of a stormwater management plan under these Rules. Where alternative buffer strip standards are approved, the width of the buffer strips shall be established by the Commission based on a minimum width of 10 feet. Alternative buffer strips must be in keeping with the spirit and intent of this Rule.

Complete rule:
www.shinglecreek.org/uploads/5/7/7/6/57762663/scwm_rules_and_standards_revised_2013.pdf

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City/watershed	Stream Buffer Trigger	Stream Buffer Width
		that would occur if the buffer standards were applied. Staff further recommends that the BCWMC require cities to provide reporting/documentation regarding occurrences and reasons for when alternate buffer standards are applied.
Plymouth	BCWMC trigger	BCWMC standard
New Hope (NH also has lake buffer standard of 10 ft from OHWL)	All subdivisions and commercial or industrial sites in which land disturbance activities will impact one or more acres; or fill or excavate over 100 cubic yards, whichever is more restrictive; or any other site if determined appropriate by the city engineer due to potential impacts to wetlands, lakes, or sensitive receiving waters	10 feet in width or 25% of the distance between the OHWL and the nearest existing structure, whichever is less.
Golden Valley (GV also has lake buffer standard of 15 ft from OHWL)	Where city stormwater permit is needed for work in buffer area: Any activities that disturb soils or vegetation in excess of 4,000 square feet; Cutting, filling, disposal, hauling in, or storage of more than 30 cubic yards of soil.	Same as BCWMC standards
Minnetonka	NA –they don't have stream buffer ordinance that applies in BCWMC b/c no priority streams here	NA
Elm Creek WMC	Land or site development disturbing more than 1 acre of land *NOTE: The city of Plymouth uses the BCWMC trigger throughout the city, including areas in Elm Creek WMC*	Buffer strip widths on Elm, Rush, North Fork Rush, and Diamond Creeks—50 feet average and 25 feet minimum, measured from top of bank.

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City/watershed	Stream Buffer Trigger	Stream Buffer Width
		Buffer strip widths on other watercourses—25 feet average and 10 feet minimum.
Shingle Creek WMC	Based on whether the project otherwise requires SCWMC review – see table in SCWMC Rules and Standards NOTE: The city of Plymouth uses the BCWMC trigger throughout the city, including areas in Shingle Creek WMC	Stream buffer on either side of the watercourse that averages at least 30 feet in width, with a minimum buffer of 20 feet, measured from ordinary high water level.
Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek WD	Any activity requiring a permit under Rule B – Floodplain Management, Rule E – Dredging and Sediment Removal, Rule F – Shoreline and Streambank Stabilization, Rule G – Waterbody Crossings, or Rule J – Stormwater Management, AND encompassing or adjacent to a public watercourse or watercourse identified as high erosion area. Rule J (Stormwater) trigger is 5,000 sq. ft. disturbance. Single family residential exempt UNLESS within 300 feet of public water or watercourse identified as high erosion area.	Stream buffer average of 50 feet from the centerline of a public waters watercourse, minimum 30 feet. Additional criteria for slopes >18%. For single family residential property, stream buffer must average 20 feet, minimum 10 feet.
Nine Mile Creek WD	No specific stream buffer requirement. Rule 7.0 requires a District Permit for streambank improvements.	Rule requires prioritization of bioengineering over riprap.

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Wetland Buffer Standards

City/Watershed	Wetland Buffer Trigger	Wetland Buffer Width
BCWMC current standard	*Projects containing more than one acre of new or redeveloped impervious area*	*Average minimum buffer widths (measured from wetland edge) are required according to the MnRAM classification:* *Preserve: 75 feet average; 50 feet minimum* *Manage 1: 50 feet average; 30 feet minimum* *Manage 2 or 3: 25 feet average; 15 feet minimum*
BCWMC Staff Recommendation	Revise to lower trigger so it's more in line with other entities and matches the trigger for erosion and sediment control requirements: Projects that will result in 200 cubic yards or more of cut or fill, or 10,000 square feet or more of land disturbance For individual single family home lots, the trigger only applies if the proposed activity is immediately adjacent to a wetland.	Wetland classification systems are currently being revised at the State level. Some watersheds have developed their own classification system, based on the current wetland classification system. Staff recommends the BCWMC keep current buffer standards, with a clarification that "wetland edge" means "edge of delineated wetland." Staff also recommends including an action in the plan to review and potentially update the wetland buffer standards to reference the new BWSR wetland functional assessment tool, once the tool is final. At that time, the BCWMC could consider developing their own classifications of High, Medium, Low based on the individual functional groups (similar to Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek or Nine Mile Creek WDs).

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City/Watershed	Wetland Buffer Trigger	Wetland Buffer Width
		Staff recommends the BCWMC's wetland buffer requirements allow cities to accept narrower buffer strips in certain situations, on a case-by-case basis, similar to SCWMC's "Alternate Buffer Strips" standard shown under the stream standards. (See sidebar above.) Narrower buffer strips would be allowed (e.g., minimum 15 feet) based on individual site conditions such as: parcel size, roads/utilities, or undue hardship that would occur if the buffer standards were applied. Staff further recommends that the BCWMC require cities to provide reporting/documentation regarding occurrences and reasons for when alternate buffer standards are applied.
Plymouth in BCWMC	Projects that result in one acre or more of soil disturbance or that result in one acre or more of additional impervious surface coverage to a developed site	Preserve: 75 feet average; 67 feet minimum Manage 1: 50 feet average; 34 feet minimum Manage 2: 30 feet average; 24 feet minimum Manage 3: 30 feet average; 20 feet minimum
New Hope	All subdivisions and commercial or industrial sites in which land disturbance activities will impact one or more acres; or fill or excavate over 100 cubic yards, whichever is more restrictive; or	Based on Minnesota Routine Assessment Methodology classification, or a similar classification system, buffer widths are required as follows (measured from the delineated wetland edge):

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City/Watershed	Wetland Buffer Trigger	Wetland Buffer Width
	any other site if determined appropriate by the city engineer due to potential impacts to wetlands, lakes, or sensitive receiving waters	Preserve: 75 feet average; 50 feet minimum Manage 1: 50 feet average; 30 feet minimum Manage 2 or 3: 25 feet average; 15 feet minimum
Golden Valley	Where city stormwater permit is needed for work in buffer area: Any activities that disturb soils or vegetation in excess of 4,000 square feet; Cutting, filling, disposal, hauling in, or storage of more than 30 cubic yards of soil.	Based on Minnesota Routine Assessment Methodology classification, or a similar classification system, buffer widths are required as follows (measured from the delineated wetland edge): Preserve: 75 feet average; 50 feet minimum Manage 1: 50 feet average; 30 feet minimum Manage 2 or 3: 25 feet average; 15 feet minimum
Minnetonka	BCWMC trigger (by reference)	BCWMC standard (by reference)
Elm Creek WMC	Land or site development disturbing more than 1 acre of land	Buffer strip widths on wetlands (also applies to lakes)—average 25 feet and minimum 10 feet. Rules also recommend that structures have a minimum 15-foot setback from the buffer strip.)
Shingle Creek WMC	Based on whether the project otherwise requires SCWMC review – see table in SCWMC Rules and Standards	Buffer strip widths must be 30 feet average, 20 feet minimum Buffers are measured from the ordinary high water level. Applies to watercourses and wetlands.
Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek WD	Any activity requiring a permit under Rule B – Floodplain Management, Rule E – Dredging	Wetland buffer widths vary by classification:

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City/Watershed	Wetland Buffer Trigger	Wetland Buffer Width
	and Sediment Removal, Rule F – Shoreline and Streambank Stabilization, Rule G – Waterbody Crossings, or Rule J – Stormwater Management…and encompassing or adjacent to a public waters wetland or other protected wetland in the watershed. Rule J (Stormwater) trigger is 5,000 square feet of disturbance. Single family residential exempt UNLESS within 500 feet of (and draining to) public water or protected wetland.	Exceptional: 80 feet average, 40 feet minimum High value: 60 feet average, 30 feet minimum Medium value: 40 feet average, 20 feet minimum Average value: 20 feet average, 10 feet minimum For single family residential property, wetland buffer must be average 20 feet, minimum 10 feet from wetland delineation (regardless of classification). See Appendix D1 from the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek WD rules regarding the above wetland classifications.
Nine Mile Creek WD	Any activity for which a permit is required under District rule 2.0 (Floodplain), 3.0 (Weltands) 4.0 (Stormwater), 6.0 (Waterbody Crossings), 7.0 (Streambanks) or 8.0 (Sediment Removal). Rule 4.0 (Stormwater) trigger is 50 cubic yards or 5,000 square feet of disturbance. Single Family residential is exempt if currently meeting District stormwater standards.	Wetland buffer widths vary by classification: High value: 60 feet average, 30 feet minimum Medium value: 40 feet average, 20 feet minimum Low value: 20 feet average, 10 feet minimum See Appendix 3B from the Nine Mile Creek WD rules regarding the above wetland classifications.