

303 **III. Environmental Corridors**

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305 A. Major areas unsuitable for installation of waste treatment systems because of physical
306 or environmental constraints are to be excluded from the service area (Environmentally
307 Sensitive Areas in NR 121 and known in Dane County as Environmental Corridors).

308 These Environmental Corridors include the following elements and criteria:

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1. Wetlands under WDNR jurisdiction.

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2. Vegetative buffers for wetlands and shorelands (75-foot minimum and excluding
312 impervious surfaces). The minimum width of vegetative buffers for shorelands and
313 wetlands may be increased to up to 300 feet where site specific habitat
314 susceptibility and protection needs make such an increase advisable. CARPC staff
315 will make the determination of needed buffer width in consultation with DNR staff
316 and the Natural Resources Technical Advisory Committee of the CARPC.

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3. 100-year floodplains and floodways.

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4. Steep wooded slopes (12% gradient and higher in the glaciated portions of the
319 county; 20% gradient and higher for the driftless portion of the county) within 75
320 feet of the ordinary high water mark of water bodies or from the top of each bank.
321 Steep slopes between 12% and 20% in the driftless portion of the county and
322 adjacent to water bodies receive conditions for stringent site plan review and
323 inspection by the local unit of government aimed at maintaining the stability of the
324 slope. Steep slopes (12%—20%) in the driftless portion of the county that are not
325 adjacent to water bodies receive recommendations for stringent site plan review and
326 inspection by the local unit of government.

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5. Navigable water bodies based on DNR determination of navigability (plus the 75-foot
328 shoreland buffer).

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6. Non-navigable streams based on DNR determination of navigability (within a 75-foot
330 wide corridor, and maintaining at least 25-feet from the edge of the corridor to the
331 ordinary high water mark or top of bank).

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7. Open drainageways (within a 75-foot wide corridors and maintaining at least 25-feet
333 from the edge of the corridor to the ordinary high water mark or top of bank).

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8. Public lands, parks, and conservancy areas (related structures can receive sewer
335 service), except isolated (small) neighborhood parks.

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9. Proposed public parks and conservancy areas; except isolated (small) neighborhood
337 parks.

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10. Problem soil areas and unique geologic formations (such as Karst features and
339 known critical recharge areas).

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11. Archaeological sites on the National Register.

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12. Endangered and sensitive habitats based on DNR determination.

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13. Stormwater facilities (stormwater facilities should be located outside
343 environmentally sensitive areas when feasible).

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14. Known or documented significant or sensitive groundwater recharge areas.

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346 B. Existing development (impervious area) is exempted from inclusion in corridors.

- 347 C. Local units of government are in charge of the local implementation and protection of
348 environmental corridors, and shall have programs to ensure the integrity of the
349 corridors based on the criteria of the Dane County Water Quality Plan (zoning, plat
350 design review, building permitting and inspections, conservation design requirements,
351 etc.).
- 352 D. The minimum criteria for delineating environmental corridors represent a basic
353 skeleton, and local units of government are encouraged to build upon this skeleton and
354 expand it.
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- 356 E. Higher minimum standards for environmental corridors will be considered where site
357 specific habitat susceptibility and protection needs make such higher standards
358 advisable (based both on current habitat quality and potential habitat quality if
359 rehabilitative measures are undertaken). CARPC staff will make the determination if
360 higher corridor standards are needed in consultation with DNR staff and the CARPC
361 Natural Resources Technical Advisory Committee.
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363 To maintain a flexible but principled administration of the environmental corridor concept,
364 the *Water Quality Plan* includes provisions for changes to these corridors as follows:
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- 366 F. “Major changes” to the environmental corridors are those changes that have the
367 potential for significant adverse impacts on water quality (determined through a
368 technical analysis by the RPC staff). These changes require the approval of the RPC
369 after a public hearing, staff analysis of the impacts of the encroachment and the
370 likelihood that the mitigation measures will be successful, and the approval of the
371 WDNR. These “major changes” include the following:
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- 373 1. Removing any mapped wetland area unless exempted by state administrative rules
374 or state-approved rezoning.
 - 375 2. Any change that would remove any area below the ordinary high water mark of a
376 stream, pond, or lake.
 - 377 3. Any change resulting in the elimination or interruption in the continuity of any
378 corridor segment which includes woodlands with significant ecological or water
379 resources functions, floodplains, wetlands, shoreland buffer strips or steep slopes
380 adjacent to water bodies.
 - 381 4. Any change that reduces the width of vegetated shoreland buffer strips along
382 streams, wetlands, and drainageways below minimum guidelines.
 - 383 5. Grading in a wetland vegetative buffer and within 30 feet of the wetland edge, where
384 the buffer has been delineated in environmental corridors, unless the grading is
385 intended to re-establish natural grades or to restore wetland habitat.
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- 387 G. “Minor changes” to the environmental corridors are changes that do not have the
388 potential for significant adverse impacts on water quality (as determined by the RPC
389 staff). These changes do not require RPC approval, though they are reviewed by the RPC
390 staff to ensure that they meet the definition of a “minor change.”
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- 392 “Minor changes” include the following:
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- 394 1. Changes resulting from DNR-approved changes in floodplain or wetland
395 delineations, or DNR-approved rezoning.

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2. Relocation or shortening of a corridor based solely on intermittent streams and drainageways, or adjustment of the buffer strip width within the guidelines.
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3. Addition to or removal from the corridors of public or private lands which do not include water bodies, floodplains, wetlands, minimum buffer strips, or steep slopes adjacent to water bodies.
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4. Changes resulting from utility or roadway maintenance or construction which meet the criteria set in NR 117 (this chapter of Wisconsin Administrative Code outlines the state shoreland-wetland protection program and includes permitted uses within the shoreland zone). (It is not the intent of the environmental corridors to prevent or obstruct necessary maintenance, expansion or construction of transportation or utility facilities intended to serve areas outside of the corridors, needed to maintain or improve the continuity of those systems, or designed to serve compatible uses in the corridors, such as park shelters or facilities. Facilities intended to serve new residential, commercial or industrial development in the corridors are not permitted.)
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- H. Grading or the installation of stormwater management measures and practices in an environmental corridor should not appreciably reduce or harm the ecological functions of the environmental corridor.