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Title: **Stream Buffer Variance Request Recommendations** Policy Number:

WRD-S-003

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Effective Date: Revision Date: Authority: Page:  
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**Purpose:**

To provide Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) personnel guidelines and procedures for developing and submitting stream buffer variance (SBV) request recommendations.

**Definitions:**

SBV Coordinator – The Stream Buffer Variance coordinator will be a member of the Fisheries Management staff appointed by the Fisheries Management Chief and approved by the Director.

**Policy:**

Buffers on state waters are valuable in conserving Georgia's land and water resources, and are critical in WRD's mission to conserve, enhance and promote Georgia's fish and wildlife resources. Stream buffer variance requests are administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR), Environmental Protection Division (EPD) as defined in Rule 391-3-7-.05, Buffer Variance Procedures and Criteria. In support of the EPD'S efforts to administer stream buffer variances, the WRD routinely comments on SBV requests recommending best management practices and actions to conserve fish and wildlife. To ensure coordination and success, WRD staff submitting recommendations on SBV requests must adhere to the following guidelines and procedures.

1. Staff responsible for writing and approving SBV recommendations should be familiar with current versions of the following resources:
  - a. Rule 391-3-7-.05, Buffer Variance Procedures and Criteria;
  - b. The Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia;
  - c. EPD's current Streambank and Shoreline Stabilization Guidance Document;
  - d. EPD's current Minor Land-Disturbing Activities Document;
  - e. EPD and Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission publication: Streambank and Shoreline Stabilization – Techniques to Control Erosion and Protect Property.
2. Written SBV recommendations must be:
  - a. Written on appropriate letterhead, and include:
    - i. the SBV Control Number;
    - ii. an Informational Request report for the SBV project location obtained from the Nongame Section Environmental Review Coordinator.
  - b. Submitted to the SBV Coordinator for review, approval and submission to EPD seven (7) working days prior to the SBV Notice Close Date;
  - c. Emailed by the SBV Coordinator to the EPD contact listed on the SBV Public Notice prior to the Notice Close Date.

3. Prior to developing SBV comments, staff should notify the SBV Coordinator of their intent.
4. The SBV Coordinator will **call** the EPD contact listed on the SBV Public Notice to discuss SBV projects prior to sending written recommendations on SBV requests submitted, or commissioned, by any State Agency or deemed to warrant an extra level of scrutiny (e.g. a non-routine large multi-acre project with significant stream buffer encroachment).
5. Stream buffer variance recommendations submitted to EPD will be retained by the SBV Coordinator for a period not less than 5 years from the SBV Notice Closure Date.