



NATIVE GROWTH PROTECTION AREA/EASEMENT (NGPA/NGPE)

CARE & MAINTENANCE FACT SHEET

Q: What is a Native Growth Protection Area or Native Growth Protection Easement?

A Native Growth Protection Area (NGPA), or Native Growth Protection Area Easement (NGPE), is the City of Lake Stevens' municipal code designation for permanently protected property that contains a critical area, a critical area buffer or both. Critical areas include wetlands, lakes, streams, rivers, and geologically hazardous areas. Vegetated buffers around critical areas are important in preventing the loss of the functions and values these sensitive areas provide and in protecting life and personal property. What is the difference between an NGPA and a NGPE? An NGPA is a separate legal tract that includes the critical area and its associated buffer. NGPAs are commonly required during the subdivision, short plat, commercial site plan or binding site plan land use review process to establish and dedicate these areas to the Homeowners Association (HOA) or similar entity for the responsibility of protection, ownership, and maintenance. Similarly, the NGPE is established through easement on a form provided by the city and then recorded at the county on the property to protect the critical area.

The landowner(s) of the NGPA or NGPE, are responsible for protecting and preserving these critical areas and buffers. In most cases, an NGPA/NGPE is part of a developed neighborhood or development, and it is the responsibility of the neighborhood Homeowner's Association (HOA) to manage and protect it. Still, these protections can also be slated for single-lot residences (generally within an NGPE). Typically, vegetation within the NGPA/NGPE cannot be disturbed, and NGPAs are to be left permanently undisturbed in a substantially or environmentally enhanced natural state. There are a few exceptions, such as removing hazardous trees that require a replacement ratio or utility extensions, etc. Please refer to the care and maintenance information below (per LSMC 14.88.295). Scan the QR code below for direct access to the City's critical areas regulations.



Wetland



Steep Slope

Q: Why are NGPAs/NGPEs important?

Healthy and mature vegetation around critical areas provides important wildlife habitat and plays a natural and vital role in managing stormwater runoff. Some of the benefits that NGPAs/NGPEs provide include:

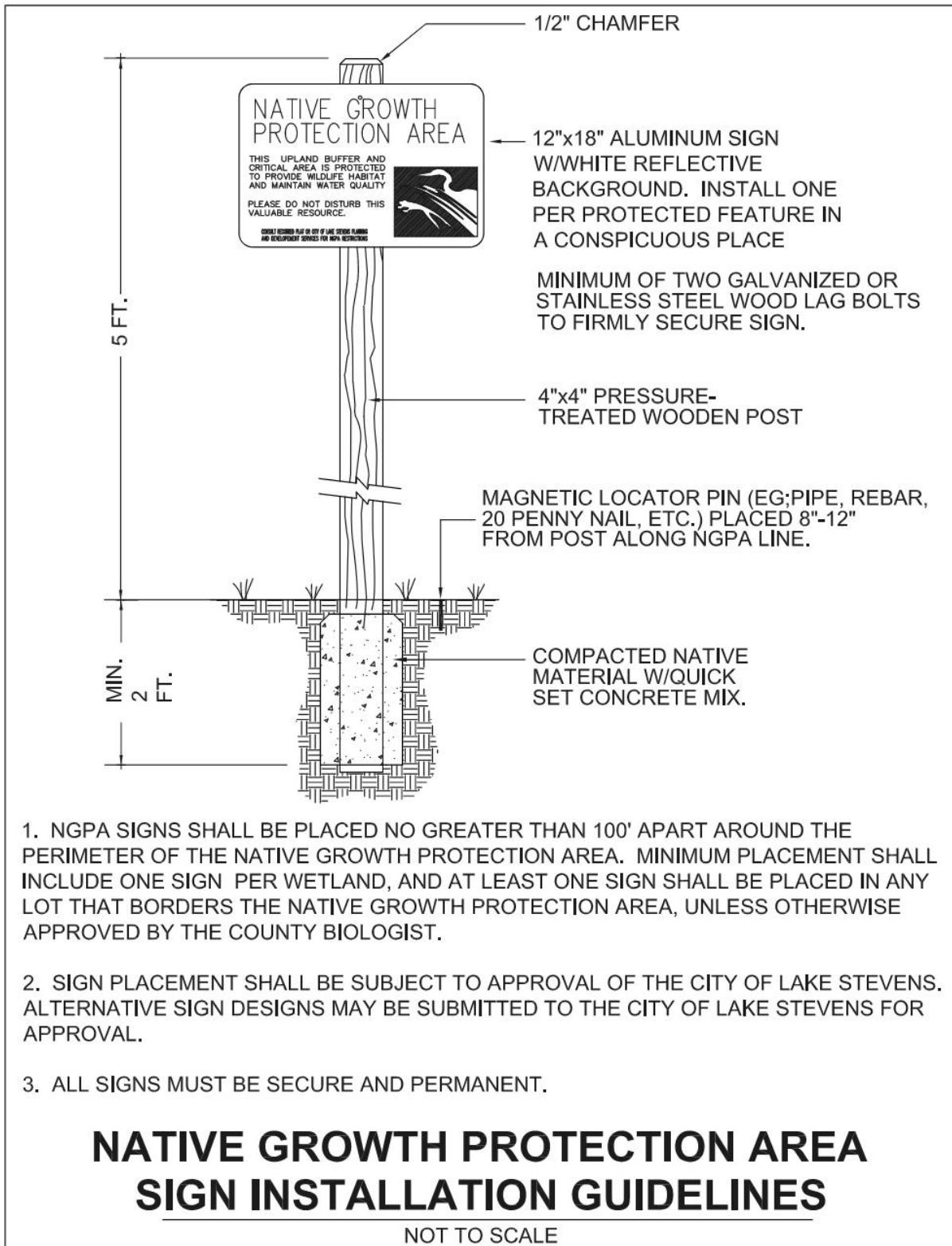
- Reduced amounts of polluted stormwater runoff in our streams, lakes and wetlands
- Improved flood capacity and reduced soil erosion
- Habitat for fish and wildlife
- Protection of property and public safety

Q: How to care for and/or maintain an NGPA/NGPE?

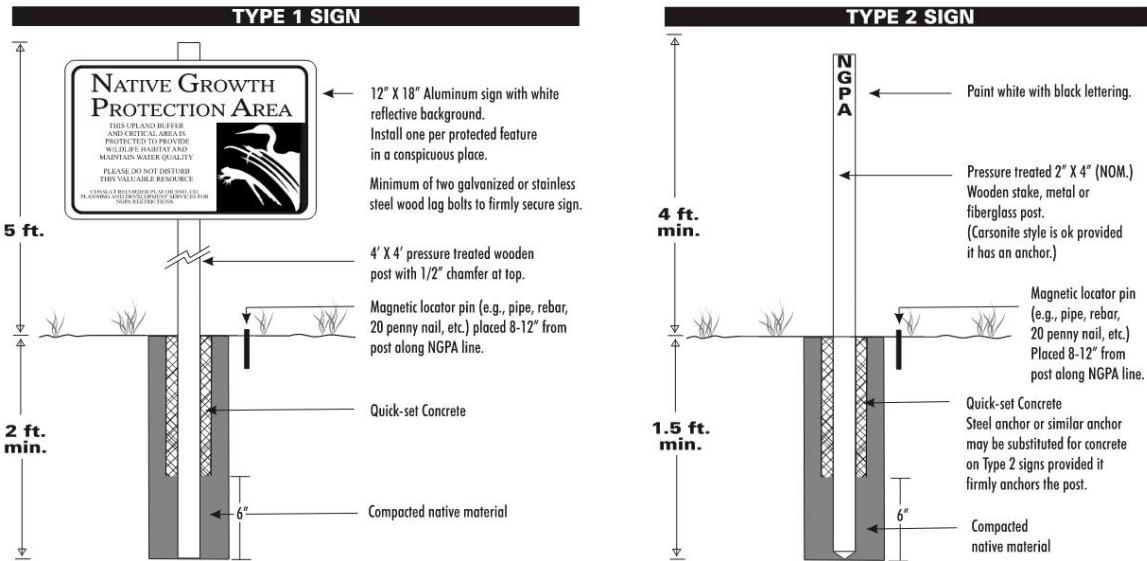
- Retain native plants and their natural condition
- No mowing or weed-eating
- Hand removal only for invasive plant communities (such as Himalayan blackberries and Scotch Broom)
- Evidence of diseased or dying vegetation or unauthorized removal of native vegetation
- Don't dump trash and yard waste in NPGAs (this is a violation)
- Avoid encroachment of residential/commercial yards into the NGPA/NGPE boundaries (this is a violation)
- Human intrusion uses such as trails, bird watching or wildlife viewing activities, homeless encampments, etc., destroy the native plants' wildlife habitat

If you notice a violation of an NPGA/NGPE or have questions about allowed activities, please contact the city's code enforcement officer and/or a city planner at 425-622-9400. You may file a comment online at [Code Enforcement | Lake Stevens, WA - Official Website \(lakestevenswa.gov\)](http://lakestevenswa.gov).

Sign Installation Standards:



Native Growth Protection Area Sign Installation Guidelines



NOTES:

1. NGPA signs shall be placed no greater than 100 feet apart around the perimeter of the Native Growth Protection Area. Minimum placement shall include one Type 1 sign per wetland, and at least one Type 1 sign shall be placed in any lot that borders the Native Growth Protection Area, unless otherwise approved by the County biologist.
2. Sign placement shall be subject to the approval of City Staff. Alternative sign designs may be submitted to City Staff for approval.
3. All signs must be secure and permanent.