

# 4 Buffers

## A Natural Features and Areas

Ecological buffers are an important tool in land planning that address potential impacts associated with land uses adjacent to sensitive features. The ecological value of the buffer is the primary consideration, with aesthetic value being secondary. Buffers support the mitigation hierarchy in avoiding some impacts, minimizing, or mitigate other impacts. They can also provide enhancement opportunities in addition to their mitigative functions through ecological design.

Enhancement opportunities that integrate habitat structures or other elements that enhance, support, or extend the ecological function of the natural feature into the ecological buffer may be identified through the site-specific studies (e.g., Environmental Impact Study, Nature Area Management Plan). These enhancements may contribute to achieving net benefit to the larger natural system.

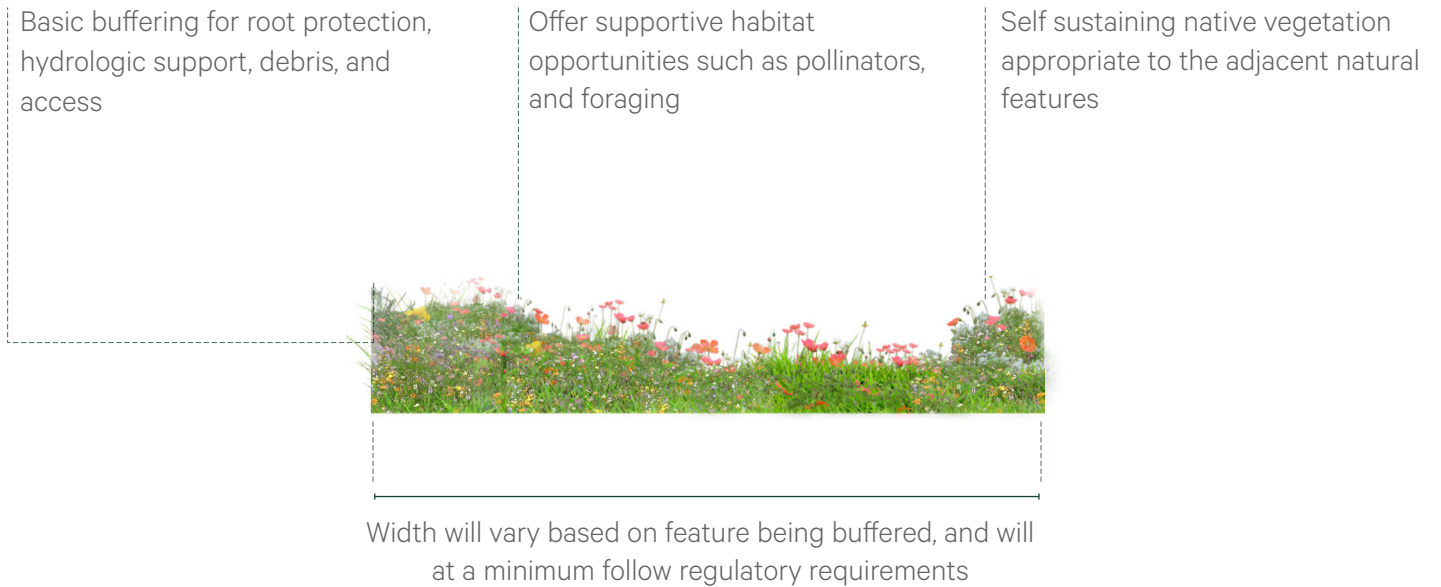
Buffer widths may be set out through regulatory processes or policy, and will consider the form, function, and sensitivity of the feature. They will also consider the potential disturbance anticipated from the proposed land use (type, design, occupancy, etc.).

For more details on how to determine buffers, the mitigation hierarchy, and how to determine buffer enhancement opportunities, refer to Part IV - Towards Implementation.

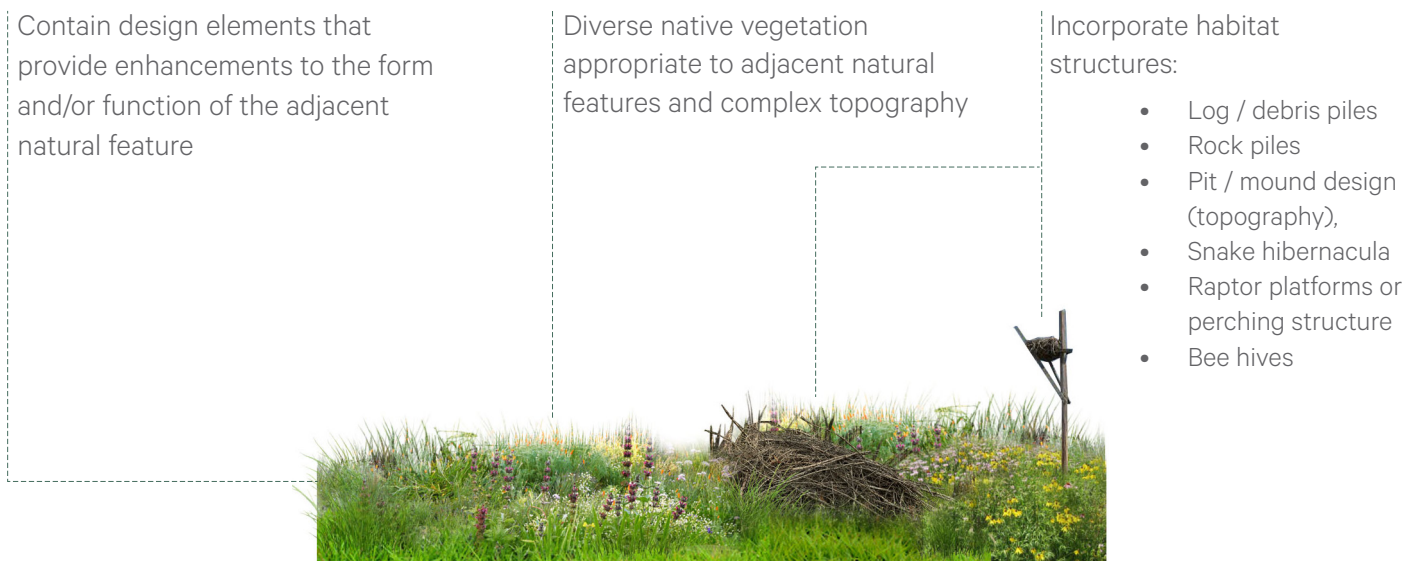
### Buffer Guidelines

- Employ the mitigation hierarchy in Part IV, Towards Implementation, to inform development and buffer design.
- Consider system-level values and functions (e.g., linkages) to inform buffer planning.
- Establish buffers through a site-specific study (e.g., Environmental Impact Study, Nature Area Management Plan) and set out environmental mitigation recommendations or design considerations (e.g., based on feature assessments, identify key sensitivities, and identify direction / early recommendations for consideration in the design).

### TYPICAL ECOLOGICAL BUFFER



### POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENTS TO ECOLOGICAL BUFFERS



**Figure 14:** Examples of Treatments of Ecological Buffers