

**84.944 ACQUIRING CRITICAL NATURAL HABITAT.**

Subdivision 1. **Acquisition, restoration, and enhancement considerations.** (a) In determining what critical natural habitat shall be acquired, restored, or enhanced, the commissioner shall consider:

(1) the significance of the land or water as existing or potential habitat for fish and wildlife and providing fish and wildlife oriented recreation;

(2) the significance of the land, water, or habitat improvement to maintain or enhance native plant, fish, or wildlife species designated as endangered or threatened under section 84.0895;

(3) the presence of native ecological communities that are now uncommon or diminishing; and

(4) the significance of the land, water or habitat improvement to protect or enhance natural features within or contiguous to natural areas including fish spawning areas, wildlife management areas, scientific and natural areas, riparian habitat and fish and wildlife management projects.

(b) Based on the above clauses, the commissioner by rule must establish a process to prioritize what critical habitat shall be acquired or improved.

Subd. 2. **Designating acquired sites.** The critical natural habitat acquired in fee title by the commissioner under this section shall be designated by the commissioner as: (1) an outdoor recreation unit pursuant to section 86A.07, subdivision 3, or (2) as provided in sections 89.018, subdivision 2, paragraph (a), 97A.101, 97A.125, and 97C.001. The commissioner may so designate any critical natural habitat acquired in less than fee title.

Subd. 3. **County approval.** The commissioner must follow the procedures under section 97A.145, subdivision 2, for critical natural habitat acquired under this section.

**History:** 1986 c 383 s 10; 1987 c 149 art 2 s 3-5; 1987 c 357 s 16; 1991 c 254 art 2 s 7; 1991 c 259 s 7; 2000 c 375 s 1; 2014 c 290 s 9; 1Sp2021 c 6 art 2 s 28