

Grading and Pruning Activity and Permitting/Approvals Chart - 2/3/2026 version

	Critical Area Buffer (incl. expanded and BMA)	Steep slopes of 15% or more in Critical area, outside buffer	FCE (Forest Conservation Easement)	Critical area (outside buffer and no slope)	Area outside CA, outside buffer, not on steep slope and not in FCE
Grading or clearing	Any area requires approval	Any area requires approval	Any area requires approval	0 to 5,000 sf may require approval under a standard grading plan*; 5,000 sf or more requires approval	0 to 5,000 sf requires approval under a standard grading plan; 5,000 sf or more requires approval
Pruning of native trees or shrubs or woody vegetation	0 to 5,000 sf requires approval under a Vegetative Management Plan; Over 5,000 sf approval required under Habitat Enhancement Plan;	0 to 2,500 SF approval not required; 2,500 sf to 5,000 sf requires approval under Vegetative Management Plan; Over 5,000 sf approval required under Habitat Enhancement Plan;	0 to 2,500 SF approval not required; 2,500 sf to 5,000 sf requires approval under Vegetative Management Plan; Over 5,000 sf approval required under Habitat Enhancement Plan;	5,000 sf or more needs approval	5,000 sf or more needs approval

Notes:

- *The more restrictive of the categories applies, assuming overlapping protections.*
- *Environmentally protected areas, such as FIDS habitat or wetlands require approvals for clearing or grading.*
- FCE- Forest Conservation Easement; CA- Critical Area; BMA- Buffer Modified Area
- This chart is to be used for informational and guidance purposes only and is not intended to cover each and every activity in these areas. Contact county at forestry@aacounty.org with any questions on approval/permitting for forestry, clearing, grading activities.
- The addition of a “pruning” category to the County Code is completely new under 67-25. Previously, this sort of vegetative maintenance activity was handled as “clearing.”
- The 2,500 or 5,000 square foot area authorized for clearing, grading, or pruning without approval applies to one or more areas on a property or contiguous properties under common ownership up to the total amount indicated.