

Birch Point East

LAND USE MANAGEMENT PRIORITY: DEVELOPMENT/PROTECTION

Watershed Characterization Results from the 2007 Pilot Study:

This watershed's ability to help maintain / improve water quality.

The Birch Point East watershed contains two streams and a moderate amount of wetlands, which help to remove nitrogen and other pollutants that would otherwise flow into Birch Bay. However, most of the wetlands in this watershed are upslope of an area that is densely developed with homes and a golf course. In general, water runoff from these potentially pollutant-generating areas flows directly into Birch Bay.

This watershed's ability to maintain / improve natural patterns of surface and groundwater flow:

Most of the Birch Point East watershed is on a slope, which limits its ability to store surface water. However, areas north of Birch Point Road are relatively undeveloped and have very permeable soils, which allow surface water to infiltrate and recharge groundwater supplies. This lessens the potential of flooding and erosion problems down slope.

Important Wildlife Features:

To the north of Birch Point Road is a mosaic of forested patches and open fields, which provide cover, foraging, and breeding animals for a variety of mammals, birds, and other fauna. The remainder of the watershed is fairly densely developed, which limits wildlife use.

Anticipated Challenges:

According to the 2007 pilot study, the Birch Point East watershed has a high potential of future development. Most of the land in the watershed is zoned "Urban Residential," which allows four dwelling units per acre. This potential increase in roads, houses, and other impervious surfaces in the area may increase the likelihood of erosion and water quality problems down slope. Also, clearing the forests for development would reduce the amount of high-quality habitat available for wildlife. The 2007 pilot study recommends focusing potential new development in the northeastern portion of the watershed, between approximately Birch Point Road and Semiahmoo Parkway. As compared to the western portion of the watershed, the northeast portion has lower habitat and water quality improvement functions.

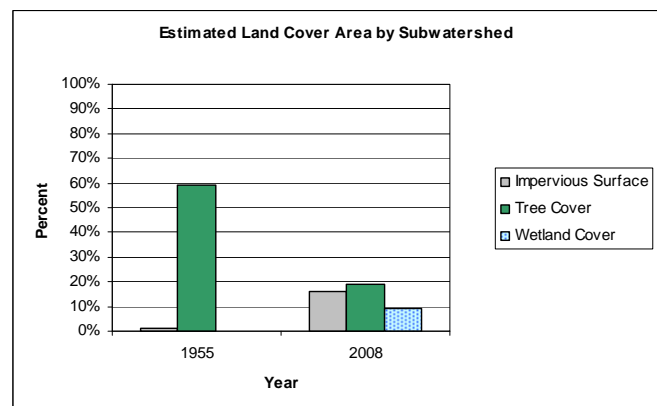
What We Found: The Land Cover Analysis by the Numbers

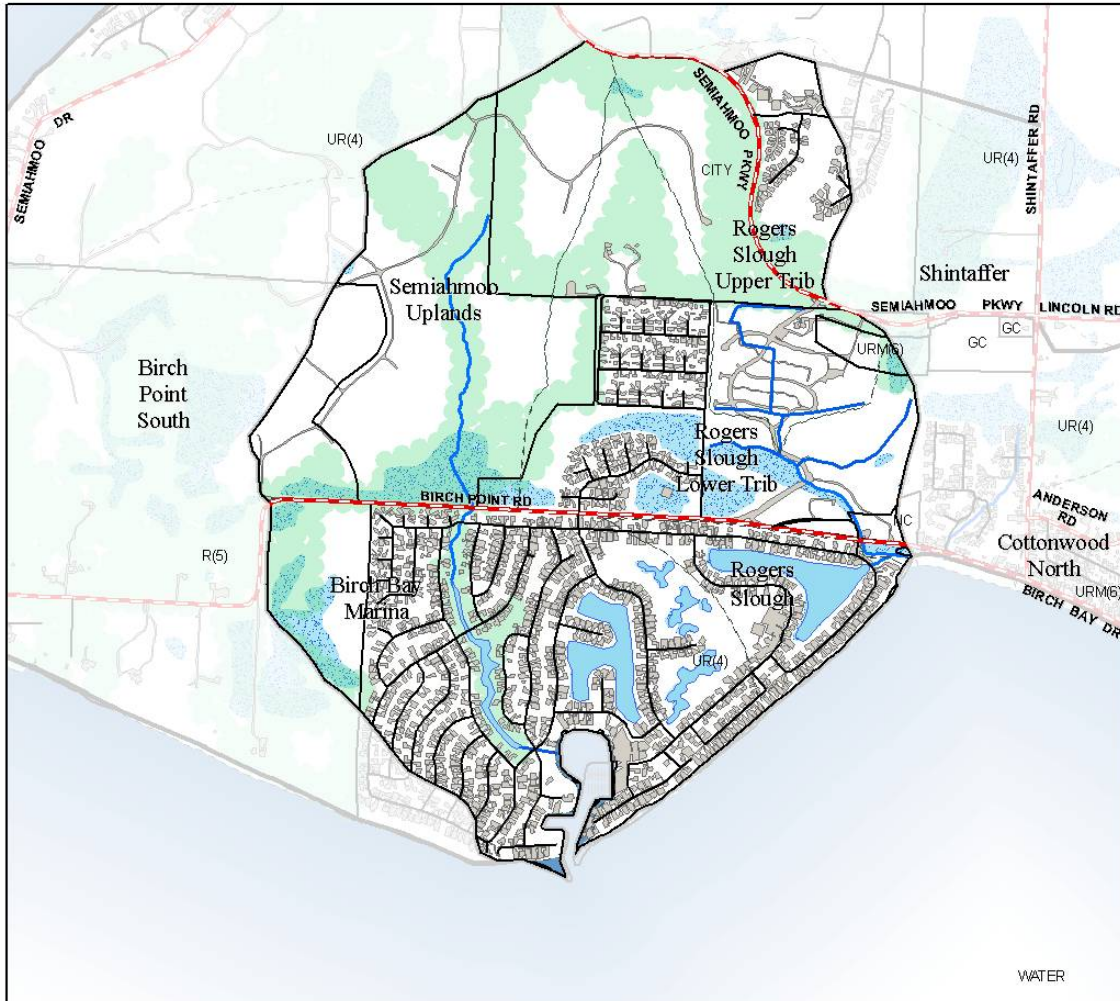
Feature	2008	1955
Impervious Surface	16 %*	1 %*
Tree Cover	19 %*	59 %*
Wetland Cover	9 %*	
Stream miles	3.44 mi	
Subwatershed Area	1,295 Ac	

* Percentage of Subwatershed

Note: Areas of tree cover and wetland cover may overlap.

Note: Wetland data unavailable for 1955





Birch Point East: Natural Infrastructure and Development

-  Subwatershed Boundaries
-  Tree Cover (2008)
-  Zoning (Summer 2009)
-  Mapped Wetlands
-  Impervious Surfaces (2008)



Questions or comments? E-mail us at pgill@co.whatcom.wa.us or call 360-676-6907