

## Birch Point West

LAND USE MANAGEMENT PRIORITY: PROTECTION (ANALYSIS INCOMPLETE)

### Watershed Characterization Results from the 2007 Pilot Study:

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

The Birch Point West watershed does not contain very many wetlands or streams, so it generally has a lower potential to help improve water quality than other watersheds. However, this watershed is not experiencing poor water quality, because it is mostly covered with forest and has few houses, farms, roads, or other land uses that have the potential to generate pollutants.

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

As compared to the rest of the Birch Bay Watershed, the Birch Point West area is on a slope and has a low percentage of wetlands, so it does not have the capacity to store large amounts of water for a long period of time. However, given the amount of undisturbed forest land in the Birch Point West watershed and the relatively well-draining soils, even heavy amounts of rain can soak into the ground to recharge groundwater supplies, and lessen potential erosion problems down slope.

### Important Wildlife Features:

To the east of Semiahmoo Drive are large areas of mature, natural forest which provide cover, foraging, and breeding areas for a variety of mammals, birds, and other fauna. Also, as compared to the rest of the Birch Bay Watershed, the shoreline of the Birch Point West watershed area has relatively few houses, bulkheads, and other structures. This natural shoreline provides good breeding habitat for herring and other forage fish that are a critical food source for salmon.

### Anticipated Challenges:

Much of the undeveloped areas within the Birch Point West watershed are zoned for residential development. 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.

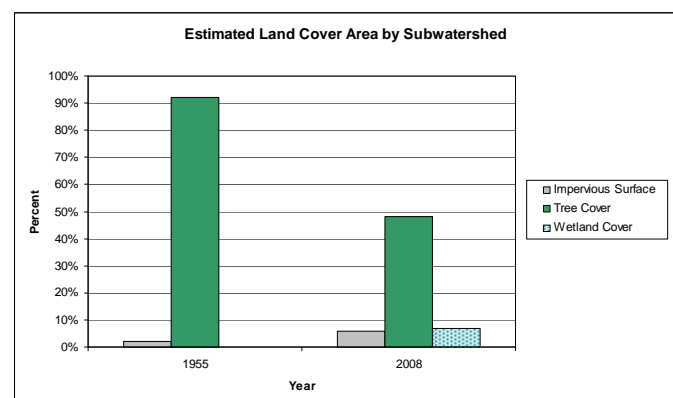
## What We Found: The Land Cover Analysis by the Numbers

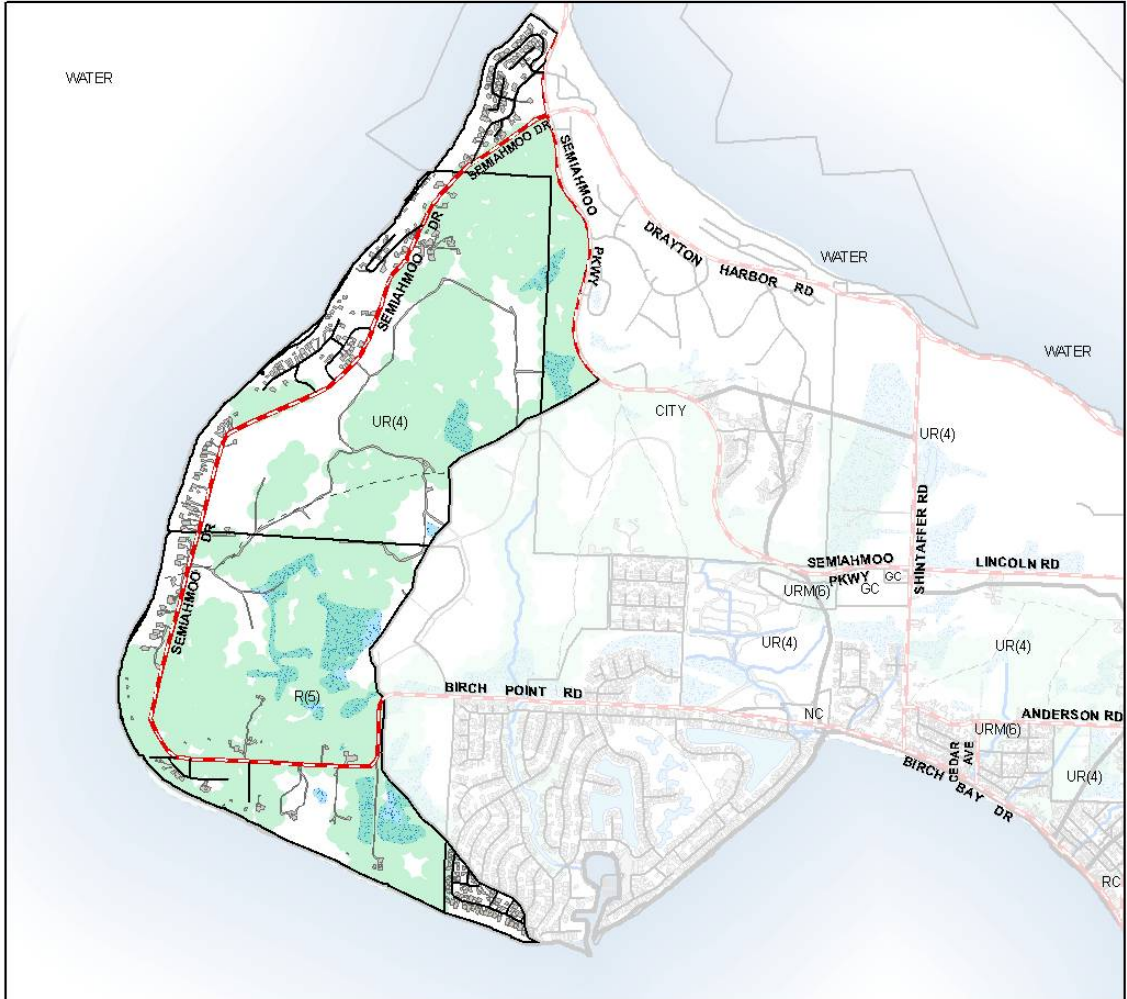
Feature	2008	1955
Impervious Surface	6 %*	2 %*
Tree Cover	48 %*	92 %*
Wetland cover	7 %*	
Stream miles	1.48 mi	
Subwatershed Area	1,370 Ac	

\*Percentage of Subwatershed





Note: Areas of tree cover and wetland cover may overlap

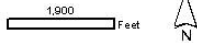
Note: Wetland data unavailable for 1955





Birch Point West: 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](mailto:pgill@co.whatcom.wa.us) or call 360-676-6907