

Cottonwood

LAND USE MANAGEMENT PRIORITY: DEVELOPMENT

Watershed Characterization Results from the 2007 Pilot Study:

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

As compared to other areas in the entire Birch Bay watershed, the Cottonwood watershed has a limited ability to improve water quality. The watershed has a moderate amount of wetland areas, but most have been partially drained and/or converted to agriculture, which generally reduces the wetlands' ability to remove pollutants from surface water. The shoreline of the watershed is fairly densely developed, so water runoff from pollutant-generating areas flows directly into the Bay.

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

The primary land uses in the watershed are residential development and agriculture, both of which utilize ditches and other drainage systems that quickly route surface water into the Bay. However, there is a large swamp area north of Semiahmoo Parkway and west of Shintaffer Road which has the capacity to store significant amounts of water during periods of heavy or prolonged rain, which helps lessen potential flooding and erosion problems downstream.

Important Wildlife Features:

The housing and agriculture land uses limit fish and wildlife use of the Cottonwood watershed. However, the swamp north of Semiahmoo Parkway and west of Shintaffer Road likely provides habitat for a moderate variety of mammals, birds, and other fauna.

Anticipated Challenges:

According to the 2007 pilot study, the Birch Point East watershed has a high potential of future development. Almost all of the land area 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 downslope. However, given the generally low ability of the Cottonwood watershed to provide wildlife habitat, water quality improvement, and natural patterns of water flow, the 2007 pilot study suggests that the watershed is a suitable place to direct future development. The exception would be the swamp north of Semiahmoo Parkway and west of Shintaffer Road, which is a prime area to focus restoration efforts.

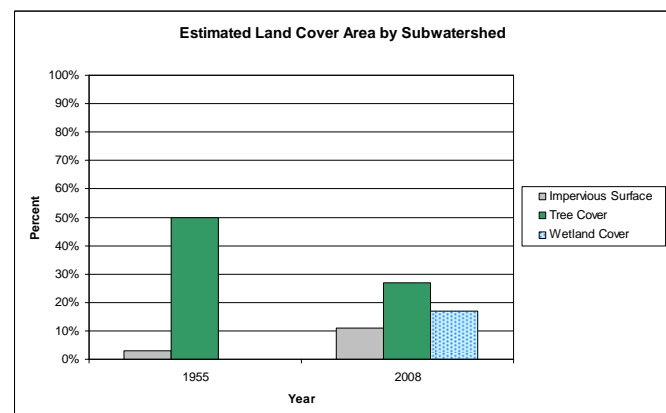
What We Found: The Land Cover Analysis by the Numbers

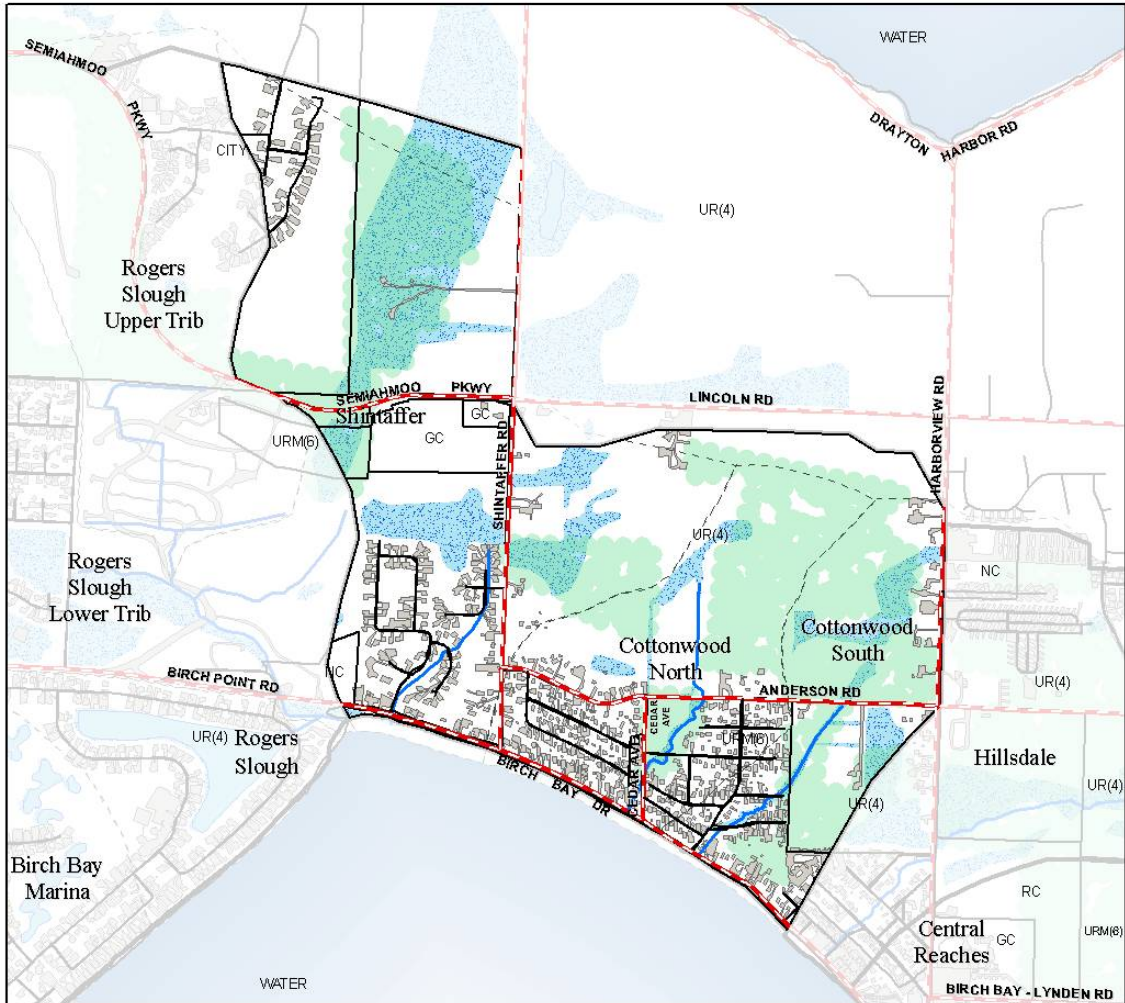
Feature	2008	1955
Impervious Surface	11 %*	3 %*
Tree Cover	27 %*	50 %*
Wetland cover	17 %*	
Stream miles	1.23 mi	
Subwatershed Area	580 Ac	

*Percentage of Subwatershed

Note: Areas of tree cover and wetland cover may overlap

Note: Wetland data unavailable for 1955





Cottonwood: Natural Infrastructure and Development

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

1,000 Feet



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