

## Terrell Creek Lower Tributaries

**LAND USE MANAGEMENT PRIORITY: RESTORATION**

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

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

The Terrell Creek Lower Tributaries watershed contains several low-gradient stream channels and a high percentage of wetlands, which are effective at removing nitrogen, bacteria from septic systems, and other pollutants that would otherwise flow into Birch Bay. There are numerous septic systems located in the upstream portion of this watershed, so the wetlands and streams here are especially important for protecting the water quality of the Bay.

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

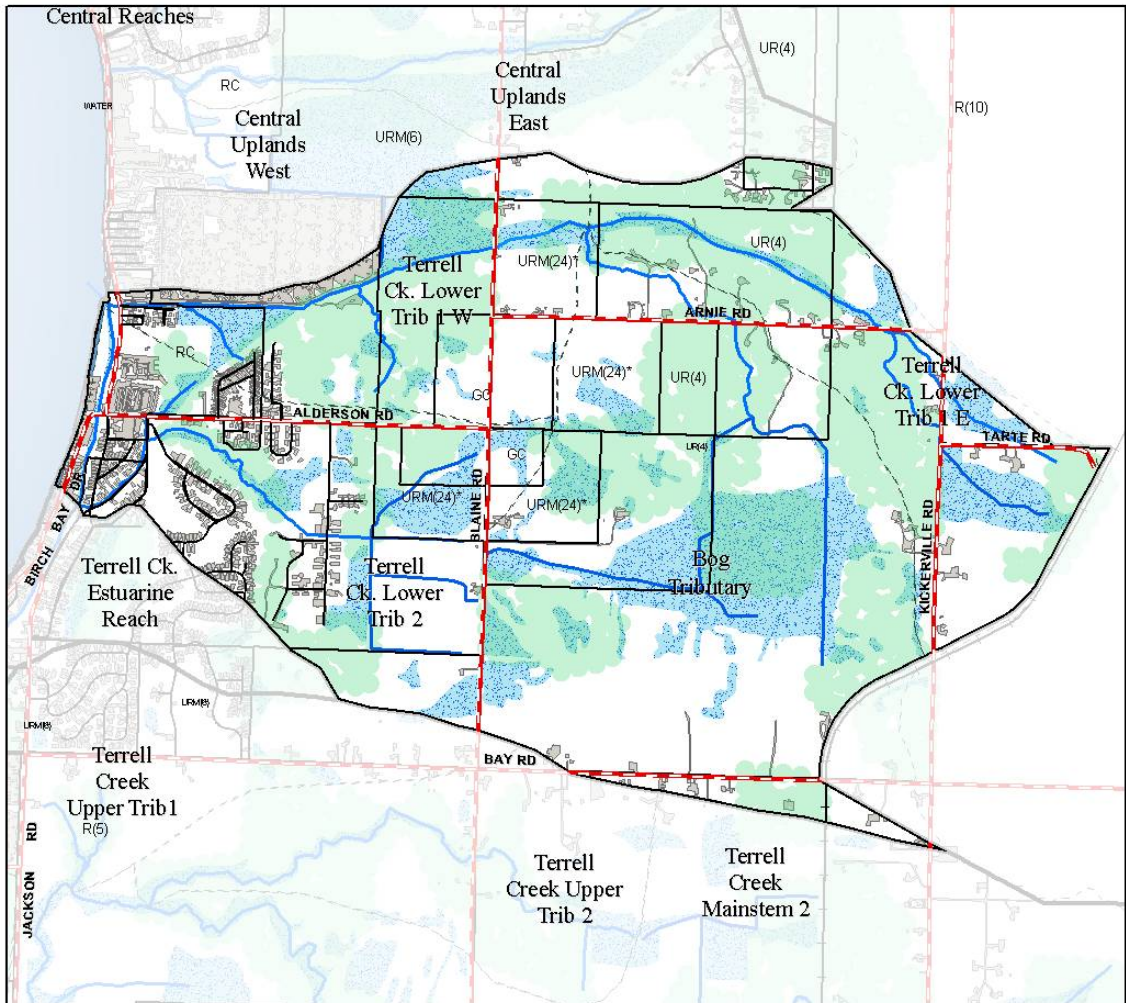
In general, the underlying soils and geology of the watershed are highly permeable, so water is able to infiltrate into the ground instead of running off and potentially causing flooding problems. Also, the watershed contains several large wetlands that can store substantial amounts of water during periods of heavy or prolonged rain, which protects against flooding. In particular, the large swamp that is bordered by Arnie, Blaine, Bay, and Kickerville roads has the potential to store a significant amount of water.

### **Important Wildlife Features:**

The watershed is important for wildlife habitat because of its pattern, or mosaic, of diverse habitats (fields, stands of trees, and shrub-dominated areas). The watershed contains streams, wetlands, large forest patches, and fields that provide cover, foraging, and breeding areas for a variety of mammals, birds, and other fauna. In general, the eastern portion of the watershed provides better habitat, because it is less developed than the western portion. Also located in the watershed is the lower portion of the Terrell Creek estuary, which provides important rearing habitat for salmon and trout. In particular, this area is vital to both young and returning adult salmon, because the brackish water in the creek allows the fish to acclimate when traveling from salt to freshwater, and vice-versa.

### **Anticipated Challenges:**

Some areas in the western portion of the watershed are densely developed, which is a trend that is expected to continue, according to the 2007 pilot study. As compared to the eastern portion of the watershed, current zoning laws allow more houses per acre in the west, and property values/development pressures are typically higher near the Bay. The potential increase in roads, parking lots, houses, and other impervious surfaces in the area may degrade the streams and wetlands, which would increase the likelihood of flooding and water quality problems.



Lower Terrell Creek Tributaries: Natural Infrastructure and Anticipated Development



Questions or comments? E-mail us at [pgill@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:pgill@co.whatcom.wa.us) or call 360-676-6907

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

Feature	2008	1955
Impervious Surface	7 %*	2 %*
Tree Cover	32 %*	27 %*
Wetland cover	23 %*	
Stream miles	8.82 mi	
Subwatershed Area	1375 Ac	

\*Percentage of Subwatershed

Note: Areas of tree cover and wetland cover may overlap

Note: Wetland Data was unavailable for 1955

