

Watershed Based Land Use Management

NOVEMBER 2009

BIRCH BAY WATERSHED ACTION PLAN

Background -

Whatcom County received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency in 2008 to implement watershed based land use planning. Birch Bay and Terrell Creek Watersheds were selected due to new water quality concerns, good wildlife habitat, coupled with high population growth. This effort builds on the Watershed Characterization work done in 2007, but will reflect goals outlined by the many community planning activities of the last five years. The emphasis for this project is implementation.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND GOALS

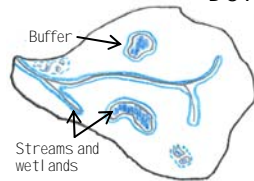
Project Work Products

- Clear and concise land use requirements that reflect unique watershed conditions.
- Incentives and new mechanisms that help facilitate appropriate development
- Action plan with detailed mapping, restoration options, and implementation monitoring

Potential Implementation Actions

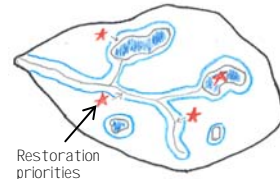
Characterization Priority and Proposed Guidelines for Development

Development watershed



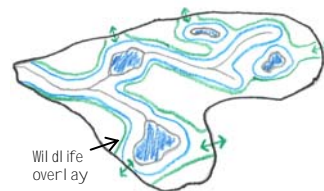
- PreDefined wetl and buffer for added permit certainty and lower project costs
- flexibility for permitting impacts to marginal wetlands
- Higher lot coverage allowances
- Transfer of mitigation to restoration watersheds

Restoration watershed



- restoration of natural infrastructure for increased water quantity and quality function from landscape
- Low Impact development standards

Protection watershed



- wildlife corridors and protection strategies
- Vegetation conservation incentives
- Priority for open space taxation

Goals and Outcomes

The principal goal of the proposed effort is to implement a watershed-focused planning model for land use decision-making that maintains and improves water quality and wildlife habitat while improving the permit process to facilitate smart growth. The intended outcomes are:

- Certainty and less permit time for appropriate development
- Mitigation that reflects watershed processes,
- Financial incentives for protection of natural infrastructure,
- Open shellfish harvesting in Birch Bay,
- Maintenance of wildlife habitat.

Timeline and Project Coordination

