

BIRCH BAY ACTION PLAN OPEN HOUSE

HOSTED BY

**WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT – NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION.**

**NOVEMBER 21, 2009 10:00 AM – NOON
BIRCH BAY BIBLE COMMUNITY CHURCH
7039 JACKSON ROAD, BLAINE WA**

From 10AM – Noon on November 21, 2009, the Whatcom County Natural Resources Division hosted an open house to discuss the Birch Bay Watershed Action Plan. The action plan builds on previous efforts of watershed characterization with the intent to implement watershed based land use planning. The open house was attended by approximately 50 people.

The first half hour of the open house was dedicated to allowing the public to visit the 3 feedback stations and provide input to, and ask question of, Whatcom County staff. The 3 stations were:

- Vision and Goals Summary – What is the project and how does it build on past Birch Bay planning efforts and fit in with other ongoing efforts
- Watershed Portfolios – Initial results of the watershed characterization
- Implementation Strategies – How to convert plan recommendations to actions on the ground.

At 10:30, Peter Gill, of Whatcom County Planning and Development Services, greeted the audience and introduced Margaret Clancy, a consultant with ESA Adolfson, who provided a powerpoint presentation. The presentation covered the goal of the action plan, how it will be accomplished, and who will benefit. The presentation is available online at:

http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/naturalresources/specialprojects/pdf/presentation_nov09_openhouse.pdf

After the presentation, the floor was opened to the audience to ask questions. Input included concerns over how the action plan would impact agriculture, how the action plan would interface with the Critical Areas Ordinance and the Conservation Program on Agricultural Lands, the importance of building on previous planning efforts through implementation rather than producing more planning documents, and providing an avenue for citizen involvement and decision making responsibility. Further written comments are included as attachment B.

Following the open-floor discussion, which lasted until nearly 11:30, staff continued to be available to discuss the action plan with the public. The open house came to a close at 12:15PM.

APPENDIX A Open House Agenda



WHATCOM COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE DIVISION OPEN HOUSE

NOVEMBER 21, 2009 10:00 AM – NOON
BIRCH BAY BIBLE COMMUNITY CHURCH
7039 JACKSON ROAD, BLAINE WA

OPEN HOUSE AGENDA

10:00 **Feedback Stations Open:** Please let us know what you think so we can propose solutions later this winter.

1. Vision and Goals Summary - What is the project and how does it build on past Birch Bay planning efforts and fit in with other ongoing efforts
2. Watershed Portfolios – Initial results of the watershed characterization
3. Implementation Strategies – How to convert plan recommendations to actions on the ground

10:30 **First presentation/talk (approximately 15 minutes)**

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- How will we do it?
- Who benefits from this effort?

10:45 **Talk with staff, provide input at stations**

11:15 **Second presentation (approximately 15 minutes, same as the first)**

12:00 **Close**

How you can stay involved:

THE WEB - Connect to the Project Website <http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/naturalresources/specialprojects.jsp>

THE MAIL – Sign up to be on the project mailing list to receive updates via email or regular mail

IN PERSON - Attend a future workshop; specific dates to be determined:

Winter 2010 – Update on project progress and implementation tool development

Summer 2010 – Hands-on review of proposed strategies

Fall 2010 – Summary meeting to present project outcomes

If you have questions or need more information, please contact:

Peter Gill
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
360.676.6907
PGill@co.whatcom.wa.us

APPENDIX B
Follow-up Comments

11/21/09 Open House and Follow-up Correspondence

Birch Bay Bible Community Church

Verbal Comments

How is the County going to enable local decision making over final outcomes? The County should empower a decision making body for the Birch Bay Watershed similar to the Bertrand WID or sub-flood zone districts.
- Skip Richards

What is going to happen to farming if 30% of the area is wetland?

- Bob Wiesen

The area is not a “Watershed” and should not be labeled as such, because there is no infiltration, the clay soils are a thousand feet deep in this part of the county. Stormwater ponds are the best way to handle surface water runoff.

- Tom ?

Much of the water quality problems are related to practices during construction. The County should do more about construction related stormwater problems rather than post-construction.

- Patrick Alesse

The County should hold focused stakeholder meetings to involve a wider spectrum of the community, farmers, industry, developers, residential from upper watershed, etc.

-Various

Written Comments

“Lake Terrell East – I think it was missed that portions of this watershed have highly impermeable underlying soils – heavy and deep layers of clay.”

- Anonymous

“The previous planning efforts were based on a variety of planning area boundaries. As a result, there are gaps in the “vision” for the future growth and development of the watershed. More work needs to be done to establish a unified vision for the planning area.”

- Anonymous

“Please include Birch Point West in your project/recommendations.”

- Keats Garman

“Re: birch Point West I notice the tree cover represented must be early 2008 before Trillium did extensive logging. Since then, we have noticed a significant increase in stormwater run-off, despite the building of detention ponds. Damage has resulted – washing out down slope properties and Carey Lane. All this before any impervious surfaces from development is done. How can this be zoned UR4? Damage from development would be disastrous. We need UR(4) changed to R5.”

- Gail Garman

“SW Corner of Thornton and Olson water flows east to Nooksack – not to the lake.”

-Anonymous

I would like to remind that the community has earlier identified the need for a tree retention ordinance and the need for low impact development standards. To date, some developers have not been allowed to do low impact stuff because it's not mentioned in the regulations. I know some stuff is happening now re: LID, just want to be sure it is coordinated with your process. Sandy Peterson presented info to BBWARM on the 2005 Stormwater manual that is going to be adopted by Whatcom County, also want to be sure of coordination of that effort.

-Kathy Berg

There is a reservoir of ill will among some in the community because of Critical Areas, UGAs, OSS inspections, Teaparty rolings, etc. I think we can agree that further regulatory-driven efforts will continue to meet resistance.

I think your best approach going forward is to convene a group of stakeholders from ag, development, shore residents in Birch Bay, Lake Terrell users, wildlife appreciators, and other upland residents to work with you on developing specific proposals.

There are a couple of inaccuracies in the Birch Point West fact sheet I would like to point out.

- the major forested areas lie to the east of Semiahmoo Drive, on the Trillium property, not west of SD as noted in the sheet.
- Trillium clear cut a great deal of the forest several years ago, and I feel that the 48% tree cover figure you cite is high. There are certainly corridors of forest left standing, but if you glance at an aerial photo of the area, I think you will agree that perhaps 25-30% currently has tree cover, and perhaps even less.
- I am not sure what stream miles (1.48) you are including here. I am not aware of any streams, save perhaps during winter storm water runoff, where ditches capture some of the sheet flow from the property and deliver it to detention ponds.

Again, I support your efforts, encourage you to reconsider your approach viz. the community, and hope my comments are helpful.”

-Keats Garman

WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PLEASE ANNOUNCE**

Birch Bay Watershed Action Plan Open House

November 21, 2009 10:00am - Noon
Birch Bay Bible Community Church
7039 Jackson Rd. Blaine, Wa

Whatcom County is hosting an open house to discuss watershed based land use management in the Birch Bay Watershed. The event is open to all. Stop by to hear about how this project fits with existing plans and programs. Staff and consultants will be available to talk one-on-one with you about resource protection and development. We will be giving a brief presentation at 10:30 and again at 11:15.

Please come by and give us your thoughts on:

- What you would like to see out of this project;
- Potential implementation strategies;
- A draft profile of your watershed.

For more information on these events, or general information on the Birch Bay Action Plan, please visit the County's Natural Resource website at

<http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/naturalresources/specialprojects.jsp>, or contact Peter Gill, PGill@co.whatcom.wa.us, 360.676.6907.



Vision and Goals for Birch Bay Watershed

- Have past planning efforts correctly captured your vision and goals for Birch Bay?
- Do you see anything that you want to change based on the new watershed characterization information?



A Draft Profile of Your Sub-Watershed

- Is there anything about the sub-watershed that we've missed?
- What do you think about the current plans for development in your sub-watershed? Do these plans match your vision for the watershed?



Potential Implementation Strategies

- What are your initial reactions to these options?
- Which are you most interested in? Which are you least interested in?
- Are there other ideas we should be considering?

