Wetland & Stream Mitigation Planning

MAY 2010

BIRCH BAY WATERSHED ACTION PLAN

TOOL OVERVIEW HANDOUT #1

Work Product

- Off-site wetland mitigation program with a roster of restoration sites selected according to the results of the 2007 Watershed Characterization Pilot Study.

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.

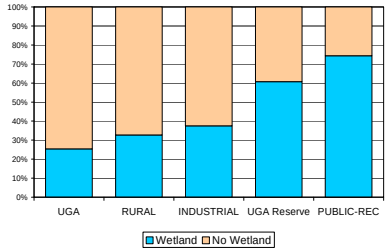
Implementation

Off-Site Wetland and Stream Mitigation

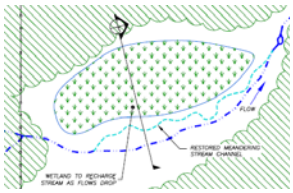
Plan for likely impacts in the watershed

- Promote growth where it has least impact
- development with the community interest first
- Avoid and minimize impacts to critical areas
- Establish a voluntary fee based program to mitigate development impacts

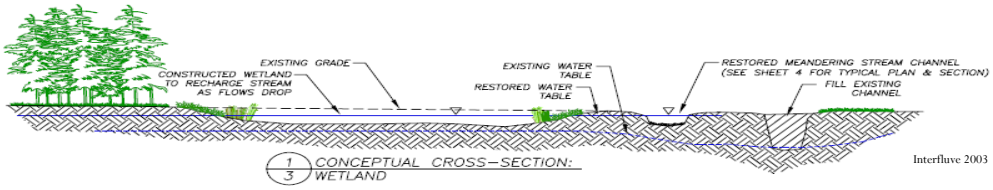
Wetland Cover by Comp Plan Designation



Consolidate mitigation to Achieve ecological goals



- County compiles roster of best wetland and stream restoration sites throughout the watershed .
- Individual impacts are offset through consolidated, larger mitigation projects on these sites
- Projects are managed by single entity responsible for long term success



Outreach

The County is seeking input from property owners and developers on the roster of potential mitigation and restoration sites. We want to know what stakeholders think about a fee-based mitigation program. Residents of the watershed will be asked for input on the program before formal approval is sought from County Council and other State and Federal agencies that have jurisdiction.

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. The intended outcomes are:

- Certainty and less permit time for developers; and,
- Mitigation that reflects watershed processes; and,
- Greater certainty over long term success of mitigation.