

Low Impact Development Manual

JUNE 2010

TOOL OVERVIEW #2

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.

Work Products

- Land development manual that explains and illustrates conservation design and stormwater management practices.
- Whatcom County policies and incentives to support the program

Implementation



Conservation Principles for Land Development

- Minimize site disturbance
- Protect habitat and agricultural lands
- Create interconnected network of open space
- Flexible standards for lot design and layouts

Stormwater Principles for Birch Bay

- Minimize impervious surfaces
- Clean water through biofiltration
- Protect natural flow pathways
- Manage stormwater as an asset

Outreach and Outcomes

The manual will help guide the type of development residents of Birch Bay watershed want to see in the future. The community will create the manual through a series of design workshops in 2010. The technical stormwater practices will be designed by experts in the field, from consultants, staff, and community engineers.

Successful implementation of the manual depends on useful incentives and technical support from County Staff. The intended outcomes are:

- Certainty and less permit time for appropriate development
- Incentives for protection of natural infrastructure,
- Improvement in Critical Area function and wildlife habitat.

Timeline and Public Participation

