

Birch Bay Watershed Action Plan Overview

The proposed changes under this program provide land owners with an alternative approach to developing property in the Birch Bay watershed. This optional program allows for stormwater solutions that are more economical and aesthetic than conventional practices and basin-specific critical area protection. This is a new approach to land use management for Whatcom County, and as such, it is being proposed as a pilot program to be evaluated by 2017.

Program Highlights



Making Low Impact Development Easy

- Provides "off the shelf" stormwater solutions
- Stormwater facility Decision Tree
- Handbook to understand permitting and costs
- Free Screening meeting with LID Staff
- Design flexibility - parcel sizing, road widths, pavement options



Watershed Specific Critical Area Rules

- Reduced buffer widths with LID
- Mitigation of impacts through payment to Fund
- Clarity on avoidance of wetlands



Improved Outcomes

- Community supported - Modern development
- Cost effective, marketable housing
- Long term management of wildlife habitat
- Clean Water

Work with the Birch Bay Ad hoc Stakeholder group has resulted in changes:

- Simplified scoring for LID qualification
- Reduced buffer widths and criteria for wetland avoidance in "development" watersheds
- Continuity with State Stormwater standards
- Handbook to understand stormwater options and critical area protection
- Program will be a pilot, with evaluation by 2017
- Credits toward LID with off-site stormwater improvements
- Maintenance guidelines for LID Stormwater facilities
- Payment in-lieu-of mitigation focused on wildlife habitat
- Habitat evaluation data sheet for tracking impacts

