



Water Resource Special Management Areas

Watersheds Review

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What are the Water Resource Special Management Areas?

Water Resource Special Management Areas, which include the Lake Whatcom, Lake Samish, Drayton Harbor, and Birch Bay watersheds, are intended to provide additional oversight for clearing activities to help preserve and protect important water resources and environmentally sensitive areas.

How do I know if my parcel is located in a Water Resource Special Management Area?

Bring your 12-digit tax identification number (parcel number) to the Planning and Development Services permit counter and a Watersheds Planner will help you find out.

What does it mean to me if my parcel is in a Water Resource Special Management Area?

The Water Resource Special Management Area provisions apply to clearing activities. Clearing activities include most fill and grade activities regulated by the County. A clearing activity is considered to be complete once the site has been re-vegetated.

Is there a restriction on clearing activities during the wet season?

Yes, there is a restriction on clearing activities greater than 500 square feet within the Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish watersheds between September 1 and April 30.

What is an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan?

An Erosion and Sediment Control (ESC) plan may be required in order to prevent soils and sediment-laden runoff from leaving the site during construction. If an ESC plan is required, the ESCs shall be installed prior to land clearing activities, unless land clearing is necessary for installation of the ESCs. **If applicable, an inspection of installed ESCs is required at the start of the project.** After construction, the site is re-vegetated or permanent ESC measures are required.

How long do I have to cover any exposed soils?

Exposed soils must be mulched and excavation piles covered within two days.

Fees

Please refer to the current Whatcom County Unified Fee Schedule.

Information

Due to the administrative complexity of these regulations, it is best to visit with a Watersheds Planner to answer any additional questions.

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THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES HANDOUT SERIES