



Watersheds Review

H A N D O U T N

What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that contains a common network of interrelated components including wetlands, lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, floodplains, etc. that work together to move water and sediments through the landscape. Watersheds generally drain into a single body of water such as a lake, river, or an ocean.

What watersheds are specifically regulated for water quality protection in Whatcom County?

The four regulated watersheds are:

- Lake Whatcom
- Lake Samish
- Drayton Harbor
- Birch Bay

Why is so much attention given to watersheds review and activities?

Watersheds review is intended to implement management measures that protect water quality. Water quality management is important because Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish serve as drinking water sources and Drayton Harbor and Birch Bay are Shellfish Habitat Conservation Areas.

How do I know if my parcel is located in a regulated watershed?

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 if my parcel is in a regulated watershed?

If a parcel is located in any of the regulated watersheds, it may be subject to one or all of the following designations:

- Stormwater Special District
- Water Resource Protection Overlay
- Water Resource Special Management Area

Applicable regulations may include:

- Limits on impervious surfaces;
- Seasonal clearing restrictions;
- Stormwater controls for water quality and quantity; and
- Installation of erosion and sediment controls (ESC) prior to land clearing activities, unless land clearing is necessary for installation of ESC. **An inspection of installed ESCs is required at the start of the project.**

Information

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

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THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT HANDOUT SERIES