

9 Plan Implementation: Recommendations, Next Steps, and Schedule

9.1 Plan Recommendations

The goal of this plan is to guide Whatcom County through surface water management decisions that will help restore and protect Lake Whatcom and the quality of life in the watershed. The recommendations made within this Lake Whatcom Comprehensive Stormwater Plan are summarized below and described in detail in Chapter 7.

9.1.1 Programmatic Solutions

Programmatic solutions should be implemented to target water quantity, water quality, and habitat issues throughout the watershed and at specific locations. In many cases, these programmatic solutions should be conducted concurrently with structural solutions. Programmatic solutions include the following:

Education: Target everyday actions of residents, visitors, developers, and contractors. Change behavior patterns.

Public Involvement: Promote awareness and foster a sense of responsibility and ownership of Lake Whatcom; encourage the public to report water quality, drainage, and habitat concerns.

Regulatory: Achieve NPDES Phase II compliance where required in the watershed. Adopt development standards as stringent as the 2005 Ecology manual throughout the watershed, not just in NPDES Phase II areas where this is a regulatory requirement. . Allow no net loss of forest cover in the watershed. Regulate activities and products that have influence on phosphorus inputs. Encourage and require LID measures. Adopt a standard of zero discharge for new development. Require pervious pavement for all pavement, including roads, walks, driveways, and parking.

Maintenance: Use the level of service for drainage system maintenance specified in the NPDES Phase II Permit as guidance for drainage system maintenance throughout the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Inspection and Enforcement: Expand inspection program of private stormwater facilities and construction sites for compliance with regulations and conduct enforcement.

Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination: Detect, remove, and prevent illicit connections, discharges, and improper disposal, including spills, into the stormwater system. Implement a program to identify malfunctioning septic systems.

Monitoring: Conduct water quality monitoring and stream assessments in the watershed to supplement existing monitoring data. Participate in discussions on a regional approach to monitoring and the management of monitoring data.

Record-Keeping and Annual Reporting: Keep records of all activities and submit annual reports as required by the NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit.

Watershed Keeper: Have a staff person dedicated to water quality, water quantity, and habitat issues of the Lake Whatcom watershed.

9.1.2 Structural Solutions (Capital Projects)

Structural solutions should be implemented to target water quantity, water quality, and habitat issues at specific locations. These projects should be conducted concurrently with programmatic solutions and include the following:

High-Priority Capital Projects: Implement CIP-01, 02, 03, 04, 05, and 06 within the next 6 years; implement CIP-07 through CIP-12 either in the next 6 years or within the following 6-year planning window.

Low-Priority Capital Projects: Reassess the need for CIP-13 through CIP-20 after implementation of high-priority capital projects.

9.1.3 Funding

Additional funding is needed to address the issues raised by citizens and discussed in this Comprehensive Stormwater Plan for Lake Whatcom. Whatcom County should establish a sub-FCZD with authority to levy fees and charges and should introduce stormwater service rates and charges and associated policies that include incentives and development financing. Whatcom County should also explore the availability of county funding, as well as federal, state, and other grant-funding sources, then pursue suitable options. The county should implement funding mechanisms for both immediate and long-term needs and should conduct public education and involvement to facilitate support and lead to success.

9.2 Recommended Next Steps

Because Lake Whatcom and the watershed are affected by activities within the city of Bellingham, in unincorporated Whatcom County, on DNR land, and on privately owned land, effective coordination between all residents, visitors, and regulating agencies will be necessary for successful stormwater management. Successful stormwater management requires an approach based on the entire watershed rather than management according to political boundaries. In addition, actions need to go above and beyond current regulatory requirements in order to meet the desired level of Lake Whatcom preservation.

Key steps include the following:

- Adopt plan
- Create sub-FCZD and implement recommended funding strategies
- Hire/identify Watershed Keeper
- Set up education and other programs
- Implement CIP
- Continue working with Bellingham to refine stormwater planning efforts in the Lake Whatcom watershed and adopt equivalent or stronger provision in the portion of the watershed within Bellingham

- Work with the Sudden Valley Corporation to adopt similar maintenance standards and controls for new development.

9.3 Recommended Schedule for Plan Implementation

Due to the political process and the need for public acceptance, many of the recommendations made in this Lake Whatcom Comprehensive Stormwater Plan will require months and years to implement. These time intervals should be minimized whenever practical in order to expedite Lake Whatcom preservation. The recommended schedule for plan implementation is shown in Table 9-1 and can be used by Whatcom County as a guideline throughout the process. Whatcom County should monitor the effectiveness of the solutions recommended in this Plan and re-visit plan recommendations after quantifying the results of that effort. Using these results would allow Whatcom County to implement adaptive management for stormwater within the Lake Whatcom watershed.

TABLE 9-1. SCHEDULE FOR LAKE WHATCOM COMPREHENSIVE STORMWATER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION					
	Year				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Proposed Plan adoption	X				
Develop funding strategies and approach	X				
Create sub-flood control zone district for Lake Whatcom watershed and implement	X				
Hire and assign Watershed Keeper position	X				
Set up education, public involvement, illicit discharge and elimination, and other programs	X				
Adopt and implement regulatory changes	X	X			
Implement changes to County M&O program	X	X	X	X	X
Implement capital improvement projects		X	X	X	X

