

Northshore Drive Water Quality Improvements

July 2014

Community Update

Questions? Please call us or attend the informational meeting on July 30th at Bloedel-Donovan Park. Details on back.

As one of Lake Whatcom's neighbors, you are an important partner in our community's work to protect the lake. We want to make sure we keep you informed about **upcoming construction projects** in your neighborhood.



Lake Whatcom is the drinking water source for over 100,000 people in the Bellingham area, and an important natural habitat for countless plants and animals.



Media filter drains, similar to the one shown here, will filter water running off into Lake Whatcom, removing algae-producing phosphorus. Because grass is a known source of phosphorus, the filters we install around the lake will not contain the grass strip shown above.

Our complicated challenge...

As you've likely heard, **the health of Lake Whatcom is suffering** due to excess nutrient-rich runoff that enters the lake. The nutrient of concern is phosphorus, which acts like a fertilizer that causes algae to grow to unhealthy levels, ultimately leading to oxygen deprived waters that are dangerous to aquatic life. The extra algae can also clog up water treatment plant filters, reducing our capacity to provide drinking water to the Bellingham community.

The **tricky thing about phosphorus** is that it's found everywhere in nature. Fallen leaves, grass clippings, and exposed soils, when carried into ditches and stormwater pipes by rain, can leach phosphorus into the water. So we're removing the grass from our ditches and replacing them with something better - filters that will absorb phosphorus rather than leaching phosphorus.

...requires creative solutions.

We're installing a **new kind of filter** that not only physically removes the phosphorus, but also applies cutting-edge chemistry and biology to remove more phosphorus than we've been able to capture in the past. To us, it will simply look like any other strip of gravel, but underneath our feet there will be more at work.

Water will flow through a layer of sand which acts as a net to **physically trap** 50% of the phosphorus and keep it from getting dissolved in water.

Any phosphorus that's already dissolved in the water will be removed through a **chemical process**. Calcium and magnesium added to the sand will trade places with the phosphorus, creating stable molecules that won't leach nutrients into the water. The calcium and magnesium will dissolve harmlessly into the ground and water or form other molecules and repeat the process during the next rainstorm.

We have one more line of defense - **a living biofilm**. Organic materials inside the filter nurture the growth of microbes which will use any remaining phosphorus as food, breaking it down into harmless forms.

While a simple sand filter can effectively remove 50% of the phosphorus in water, these "media filter drains" should be able to remove more than 86% of the phosphorus!

City of Bellingham
Public Works Natural Resources
2221 Pacific St. Bellingham, WA 98229
360-778-7800
www.cob.org

*A legacy of people benefitting
from clean, abundant waters
and intact natural resources.*



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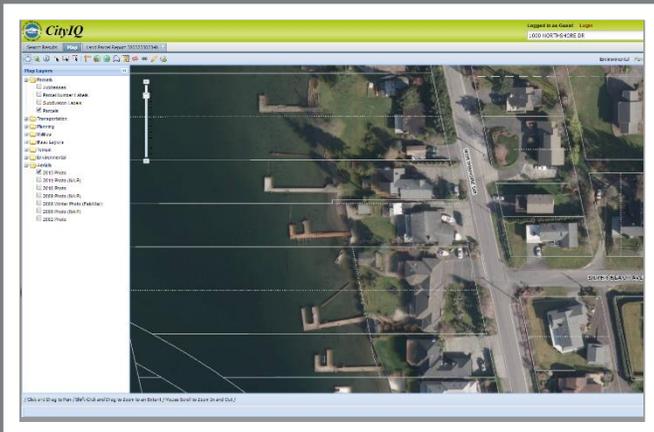
How will this project impact you?

This summer, in July and August, you may see contractors and surveyors looking around, taking pictures, making measurements, and marking utilities. Surveyors and contractors may not know all of the specific details of the project, so please call us directly with questions as they arise.

Work will begin during the last week of August and will take approximately one month to complete. You can expect one-way traffic, detours and temporary removal of some street parking during construction.

If you live along one of the sections of Northshore Drive where the project will take place, keep in mind that the public right-of-way typically extends 30 feet each way from the center of the road. It may feel like work is being done right in your front yard.

If you'd like to see exactly how far the project will extend out from the road neighboring your house, we can show you on the plans at **the upcoming public meeting**. Or, you can find an aerial photo showing the approximate edge of your property by using the CityIQ map online at www.cob.org. Select an aerial photo and check "parcels" to see the approximate location of property lines.



You can help on your property!

If you're interested in finding creative ways to reduce the phosphorus runoff from your property, like reducing your lawn, adding native plants, or filtering runoff, call or email us. The Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP) offers free technical assistance and financial incentives! For more information, please visit our website at www.cob.org and type the word "HIP" into the search bar.



This summer, work will focus on the ditches and road shoulders along the uphill side of Northshore Drive between Britton Road and the city limits **and** the center of alleys between Pullman Street and Flint Street.

Next year, in 2015, ditches along sections of Huntington Street and Shepardson Street will be similarly retrofit.

These areas are shown in red on the map above.

Curious for more info?

Public Meeting

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Bloedel Donovan Park Beach Pavilion

Contact Us

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DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington