Bellingham Habitat Restoration Master Plan

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Habitat Restoration Master Plan

- Part of the City’s overall planning efforts
- Fulfills City Legacies
"We are working today so future generations will benefit from..."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clean, Safe Drinking Water</th>
<th>Mobility &amp; Connectivity Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Protect &amp; improve drinking water sources</td>
<td>• Provide safe, well-connected mobility options for all users</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Limit development in Lake Whatcom watershed</td>
<td>• Maintain &amp; improve streets, trails &amp; other infrastructure</td>
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<td>• Use efficient, ecological treatment techniques</td>
<td>• Limit sprawl</td>
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<td>• Maintain reliable distribution system</td>
<td>• Increase infrastructure for bicycles, pedestrians &amp; non-single-occupancy vehicle modes of transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Promote water conservation</td>
<td>• Reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles</td>
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<tr>
<th>Healthy Environment</th>
<th>Access to Quality of Life Amenities</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Protect &amp; improve the health of lakes, streams &amp; bay</td>
<td>• Maintain &amp; enhance publicly owned assets</td>
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<td>• Protect &amp; restore ecological functions &amp; habitat</td>
<td>• Foster arts, culture &amp; lifelong learning</td>
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<td>• Reduce contributions to climate change</td>
<td>• Provide recreation &amp; enrichment opportunities for all ages &amp; abilities</td>
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<td>• Conserve natural &amp; consumable resources</td>
<td>• Ensure convenient access to &amp; availability of parks &amp; trails citywide</td>
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<tr>
<th>Vibrant Sustainable Economy</th>
<th>Quality, Responsive City Services</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Support a thriving local economy across all sectors</td>
<td>• Deliver efficient, effective &amp; accountable municipal services</td>
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<td>• Promote inter-dependence of environmental, economic &amp; social interests</td>
<td>• Use transparent processes &amp; involve stakeholders in decisions</td>
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<td>• Create conditions that encourage public &amp; private investment</td>
<td>• Provide access to accurate information</td>
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<td>• Foster vibrant downtown &amp; other commercial centers</td>
<td>• Recruit, retain &amp; support quality employees</td>
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<td>• Preserve farmland &amp; the agricultural economy</td>
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<th>Sense of Place</th>
<th>Equity &amp; Social Justice</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Support sense of place in neighborhoods</td>
<td>• Provide access to problem-solving resources</td>
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<td>• Encourage development within existing infrastructure</td>
<td>• Support safe, affordable housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Preserve historic &amp; cultural resources</td>
<td>• Increase living wage employment</td>
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<td>• Protect natural green settings &amp; access to open space</td>
<td>• Support services for lower-income residents</td>
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<td>• Support people-to-people connections</td>
<td>• Cultivate respect &amp; appreciation for diversity</td>
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<tr>
<th>Safe &amp; Prepared Community</th>
<th>Legacies and Strategic Commitments</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Prevent and respond to emergencies</td>
<td>Adopted by Bellingham City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prevent and respond to crime</td>
<td>July 13, 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensure safe infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase community readiness and resilience</td>
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CITY OF BELLINGHAM
WASHINGTON
The Habitat Restoration Master Plan will guide protection and restoration efforts in the city limits and urban growth areas.
Plan Vision: Providing Information

- Provide sound scientific information to inform policy decisions
- Inform restoration and protection activities
- Facilitate improved communication and partnerships
- Create opportunities to leverage additional funding
Bellingham has rich biodiversity and unique habitats

- Bellingham still has large areas of functional habitats within urban areas.
- High biodiversity because of diverse habitat types and habitat corridors
- Cascade mountains to marine environment connection in the Chuckanut Mountains
- Intact conifer forests
- Important overwintering area for marine waterfowl
- Post Point heron colony
- We have retained connections between these habitats—but these are starting to disappear, high quality wetlands, species such as red legged from- interior forest species,
- Bald habitats (shallow soils, open areas that aren't' treed that are unique between
Surf Scoters at Boulevard Park
Post Point
Heron Colony
Salmon in Whatcom Creek
Education at Chuckanut Bay
Federal, State and Local Regulatory Drivers:

- Endangered Species Act
- Clean Water Act
- Growth Management Act
- Shoreline Master Program
- Critical Areas Ordinance
- Stormwater Comp Plan
- Bellingham Comprehensive Plan
- TMDL and 4(b) Water Quality Plans
- Council Legacies and Strategic Commitments
Plan Integration

What is missing:

- Coordinated effort to integrate across plans
Project Goal:

- Produce a science-based plan that will provide a prioritization framework for the preservation, restoration and recovery of the city’s terrestrial, aquatic and riparian habitats.
Project Objectives:

1. Provide habitats suitable to support a **diversity of species** including commercially important species and ESA-listed species.

2. Ensure that **city policies and projects are coordinated** to maximize efforts towards habitat protection and restoration.

3. Promote a **sustainable ecosystem** by facilitating the health of natural processes.
4. Preserve and restore a **citywide fish and wildlife habitat network** with corridors and reserve areas to support representative species and habitat diversity.

5. Identify and prioritize limiting **factors**, threats, and stresses to priority species and ecosystem components.

6. Identify **strategies and actions**.
Funding sources:

- Grant from Department of Ecology
- City of Bellingham (Olympic Pipeline Incident Settlement Funds)
Consultant Team:

Anchor QEA

Northwest Ecological Services

Veda Environmental

Confluence Environmental
Project overview: Approach

**Step 1:**
Assess condition of ecosystem processes, structures and functions for target habitats and species using:

- Existing data
- Reviewing the literature
- Consulting with experts on the Technical Advisory Group

**Step 2:**
Evaluate existing conditions and future potential conditions
Project overview - Approach

Step 3: ID priorities for preservation and restoration

Examples of factors guiding process:

- Designated use
- Seriousness of impairment
- Potential benefit
- Resiliency/sustainability
- Project access/ownership
- Cost

Mud Bay
Step 4: A list of priority actions will be developed. Types of actions include:

- Restoration
- Protection (including acquisition)
- Regulatory

Note: Not trying to restore to what it was 200 years ago.
Project overview – Technical Advisory Group

- Provide guidance and advice
- Ensure final plan is scientifically sound
- Mix of representation and expertise
Technical Advisory Group

- Kurt Baumgarten, Planning Commission, Stormwater
- Jim Helfield, PhD, Riparian Ecologist, WWU
- James Luce, Parks Department, Arborist
- Kim Weil, Planning Department, Critical Areas
- Sue Kaun, South Side Neighborhood
- Susan Madsen, M.Sc., Fluvial Geomorphologist, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement
- Wendy Steffenson, M.Sc., North Sound Baykeeper
- Barry Wenger, Citizen, shorelines expertise
- Joe Meche, President, North Cascades Audubon Society
- Julie Guy, Cordata Neighborhood, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Developed Plan:

- Identified 32 stakeholders

Engagement strategies:
- One on one meetings
- Workshops
- Targeted presentations
- Project website
# Project Timeline (2012)

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<th>Task</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
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<td>Task 1. Project Management</td>
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<td>Task 2. Form and Facilitate Advisory Group</td>
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<td>Task 3. Develop/Communications and Outreach Strategy</td>
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<td>Task 4. Information Review and Synthesis</td>
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<td>Task 5. Develop Habitat Restoration Master Plan</td>
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<td>Task 6. Integrate into City IQ Platform</td>
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Looking Forward

- Ambitious plan
- On-going, living document
Questions?