



Bellingham Habitat Restoration Master Plan

Presented by: Renee LaCroix
Environmental Coordinator, Public Works
(360) 778-7966 rlacroix@cob.org



City of
Bellingham

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...”

Clean, Safe Drinking Water

- Protect & improve drinking water sources
- Limit development in Lake Whatcom watershed
- Use efficient, ecological treatment techniques
- Maintain reliable distribution system
- Promote water conservation

Healthy Environment

- Protect & improve the health of lakes, streams & bay
- Protect & restore ecological functions & habitat
- Reduce contributions to climate change
- Conserve natural & consumable resources

Vibrant Sustainable Economy

- Support a thriving local economy across all sectors
- Promote inter-dependence of environmental, economic & social interests
- Create conditions that encourage public & private investment
- Foster vibrant downtown & other commercial centers
- Preserve farmland & the agricultural economy

Sense of Place

- Support sense of place in neighborhoods
- Encourage development within existing infrastructure
- Preserve historic & cultural resources
- Protect natural green settings & access to open space
- Support people-to-people connections

Safe & Prepared Community

- Prevent and respond to emergencies
- Prevent and respond to crime
- Ensure safe infrastructure
- Increase community readiness and resilience

Mobility & Connectivity Options

- Provide safe, well-connected mobility options for all users
- Maintain & improve streets, trails & other infrastructure
- Limit sprawl
- Increase infrastructure for bicycles, pedestrians & non-single-occupancy vehicle modes of transportation
- Reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles

Access to Quality of Life Amenities

- Maintain & enhance publicly owned assets
- Foster arts, culture & lifelong learning
- Provide recreation & enrichment opportunities for all ages & abilities
- Ensure convenient access to & availability of parks & trails citywide

Quality, Responsive City Services

- Deliver efficient, effective & accountable municipal services
- Use transparent processes & involve stakeholders in decisions
- Provide access to accurate information
- Recruit, retain & support quality employees

Equity & Social Justice

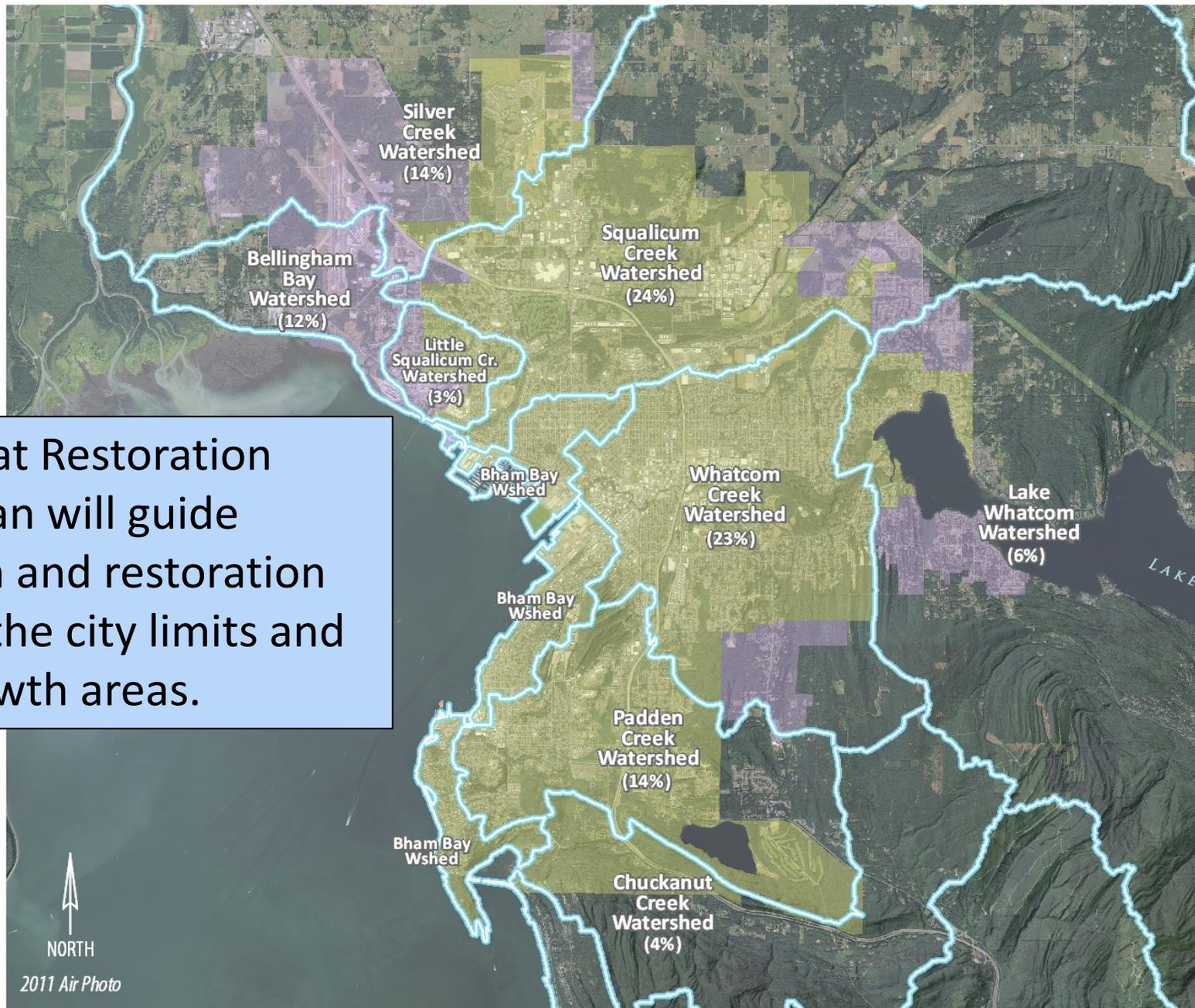
- Provide access to problem-solving resources
- Support safe, affordable housing
- Increase living wage employment
- Support services for lower-income residents
- Cultivate respect & appreciation for diversity

Legacies and Strategic Commitments

Adopted by Bellingham City Council
July 13, 2009



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



Chuckanut Village Marsh

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.

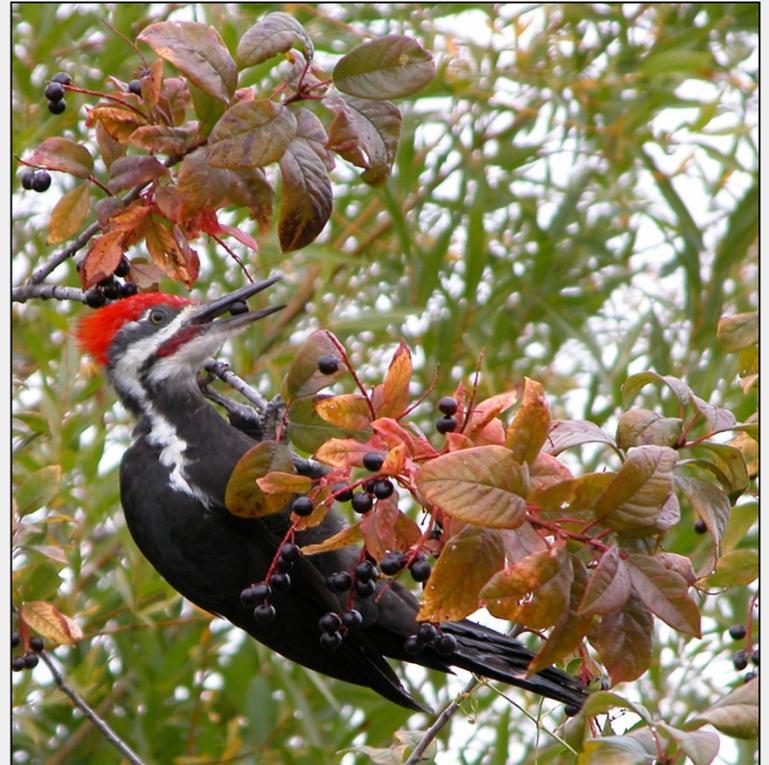


Project Objectives (con't)

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**.



Pileated Woodpecker

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



NW ECOLOGICAL SERVICES





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

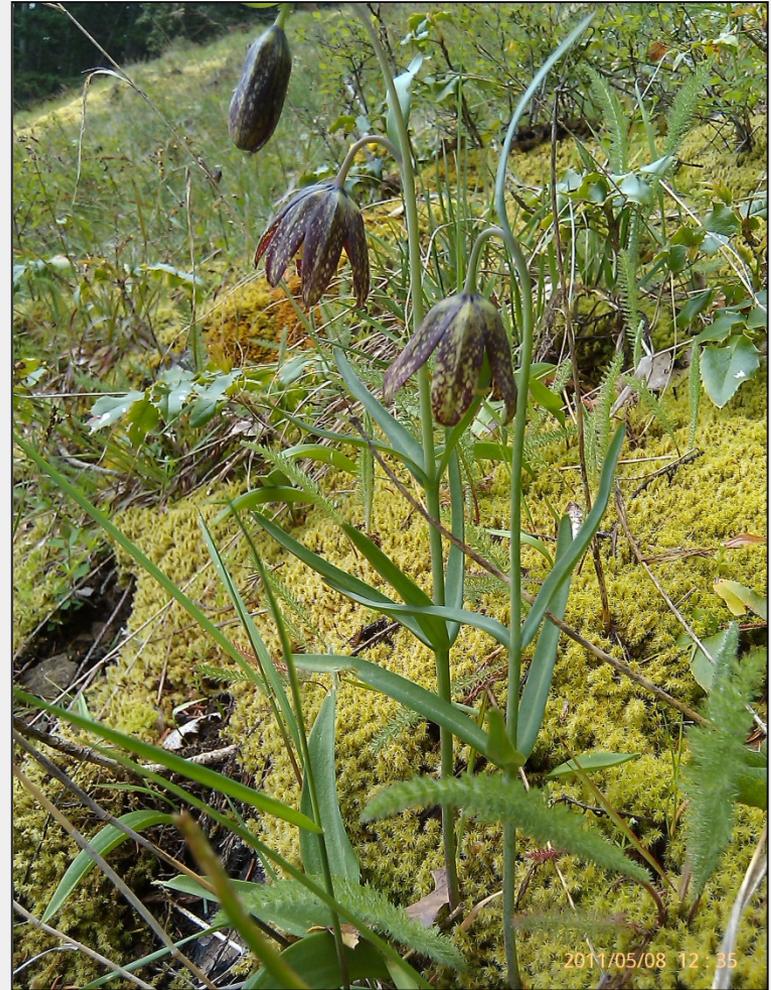
Project overview -- Approach

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.



Checker Lilies



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

Project Overview— Stakeholder Engagement

Developed Plan:

- Identified 32 stakeholders

Engagement strategies:

- One on one meetings
- Workshops
- Targeted presentations
- Project website



Project Timeline (2012)

Task	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Task1. Project Management	Yellow										
Task2. Form and Facilitate Advisory Group	Green										
Task3. Develop/Communications and Outreach Strategy					Blue						
Task4. Information Review and Synthesis	Purple	Purple	Purple								
Task5. Develop Habitat Restoration Master Plan						Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Task6. Integrate into City IQ Platform									Orange	Orange	Orange

Looking Forward

- Ambitious plan
- On-going, living document



Questions?

