

What is an estuary?

An estuary is a partially enclosed, sheltered coastal water body where freshwater from rivers and streams mixes with salt water from the ocean.

Benefits of healthy estuaries:

Native plants filter pollution out of water entering the estuary.

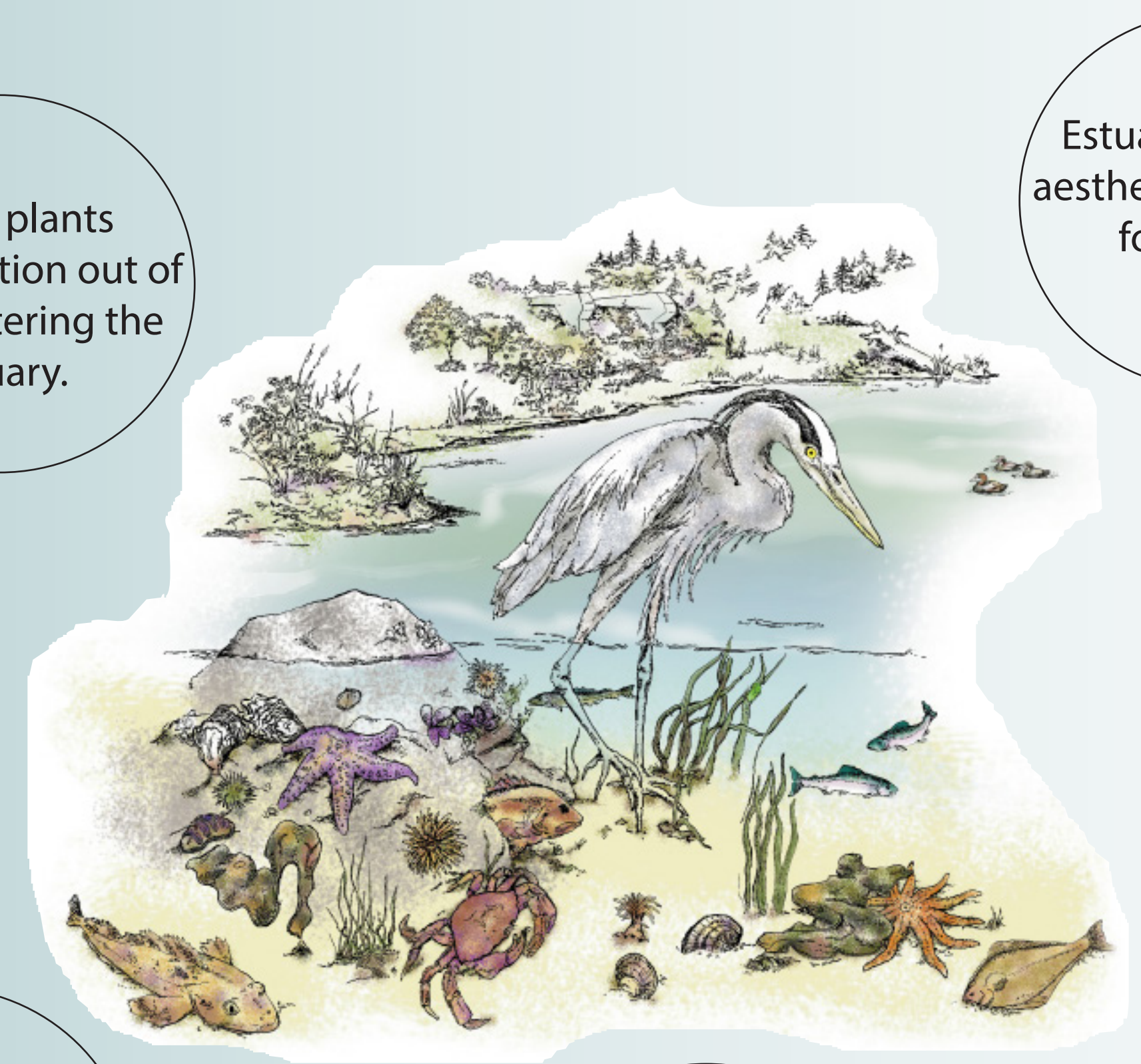
Estuaries provide aesthetic enjoyment for people.

Estuaries promote nutrient and sediment exchange with marine systems.

Estuaries provide critical natural habitat for fish, mammals, birds, and other wildlife.

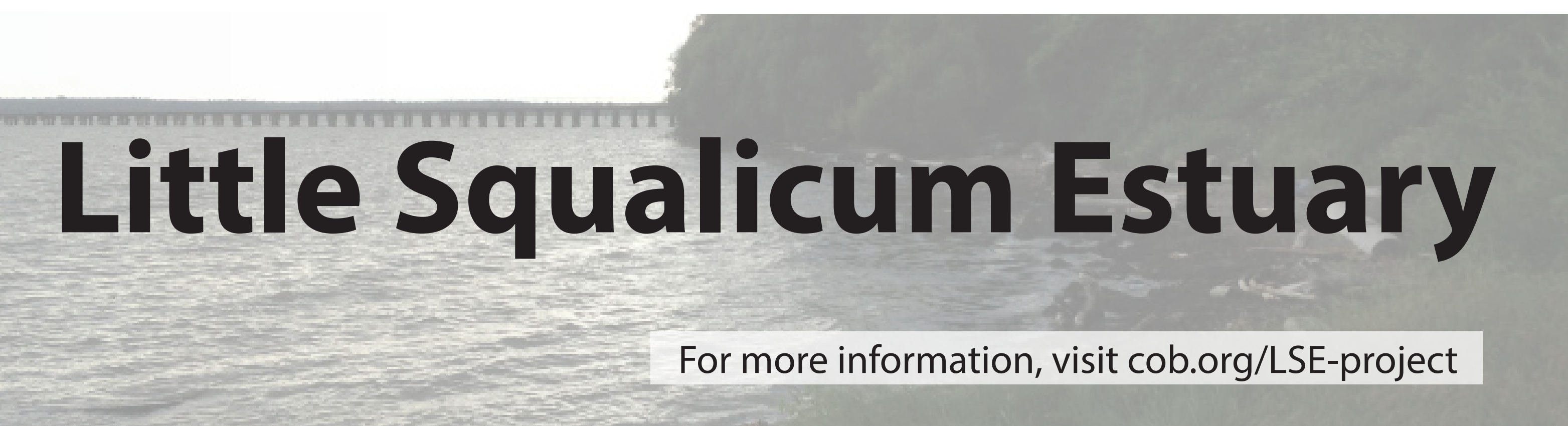
Estuaries serve as buffers for sea level rise and other impacts of climate change.

Estuaries are important rearing habitat for juvenile salmon.



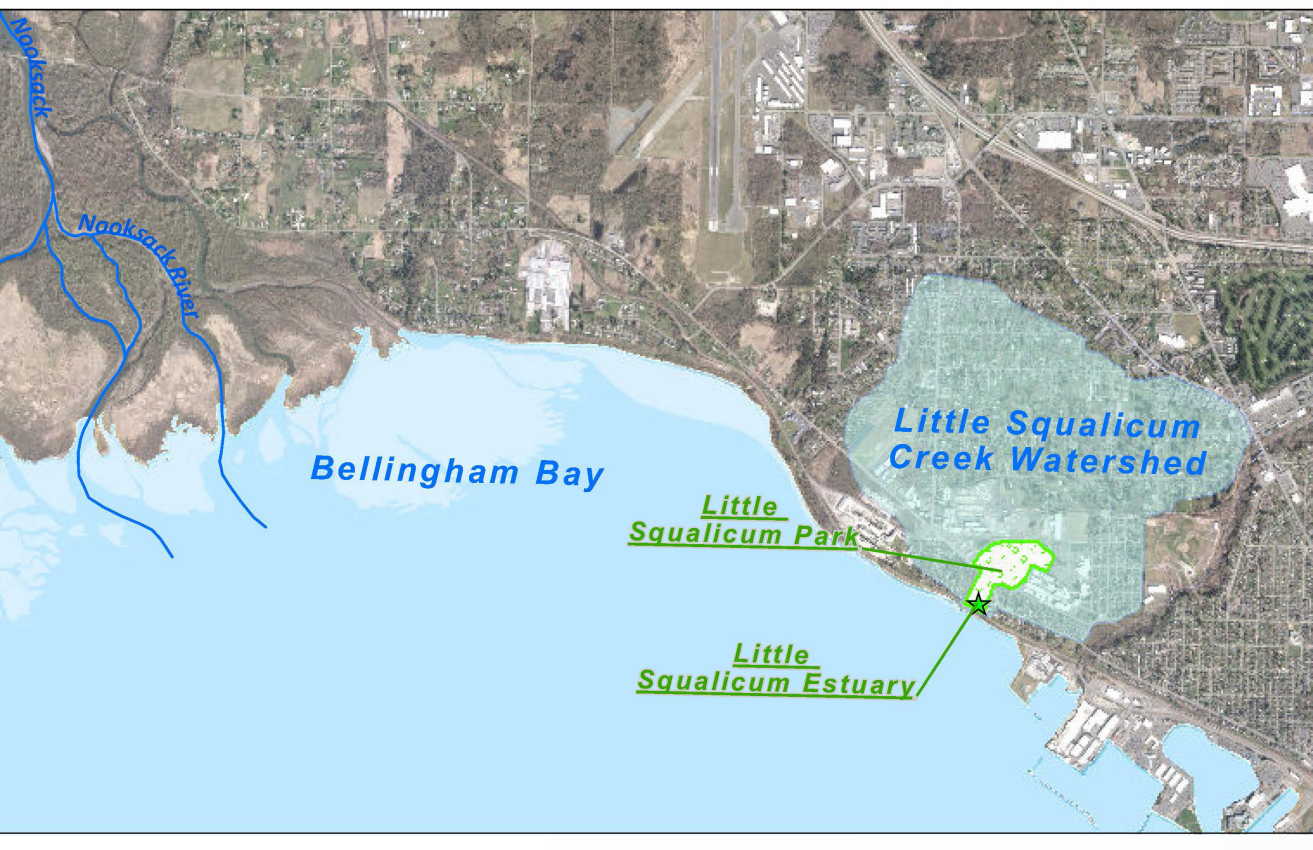
How you can help:

- ✓ Restore native vegetation at planting parties organized by the City of Bellingham and other local organizations.
- ✓ Preserve plants and wildlife by keeping dogs out of the estuary and staying on designated trails.
- ✓ Improve water quality in Little Squalicum Creek (a stream fed heavily by stormwater) by picking up after your pet, washing your car at a car wash, and practicing natural yard care.



What

The City of Bellingham is constructing an estuary in the lower part of Little Squalicum Park, where Little Squalicum Creek meets Bellingham Bay. This project improves water quality and replaces essential coastal habitat that has been lost to development.



Why

Little Squalicum Creek is a highly degraded basin containing stormwater from surrounding development, and has lost historic freshwater wetland and estuary features.

- Estuary creation in this creek is crucial to:
- Increase rearing and foraging habitat for juvenile salmon from the Nooksack River and Squalicum Creek.
 - Improve water quality in the marine nearshore and the lower Nooksack basin by returning tidal and sedimentary processes, riparian vegetation, and historic wetlands.

When

The City of Bellingham completed a Master Plan for Little Squalicum Park in 2010. Final design of the estuary portion of this plan was completed in 2017. The estuary will be constructed in 2022.

This project would not be possible without our many funders, and coordination with Lehigh Northwest Cement Company, Port of Bellingham, Whatcom County, and BNSF.



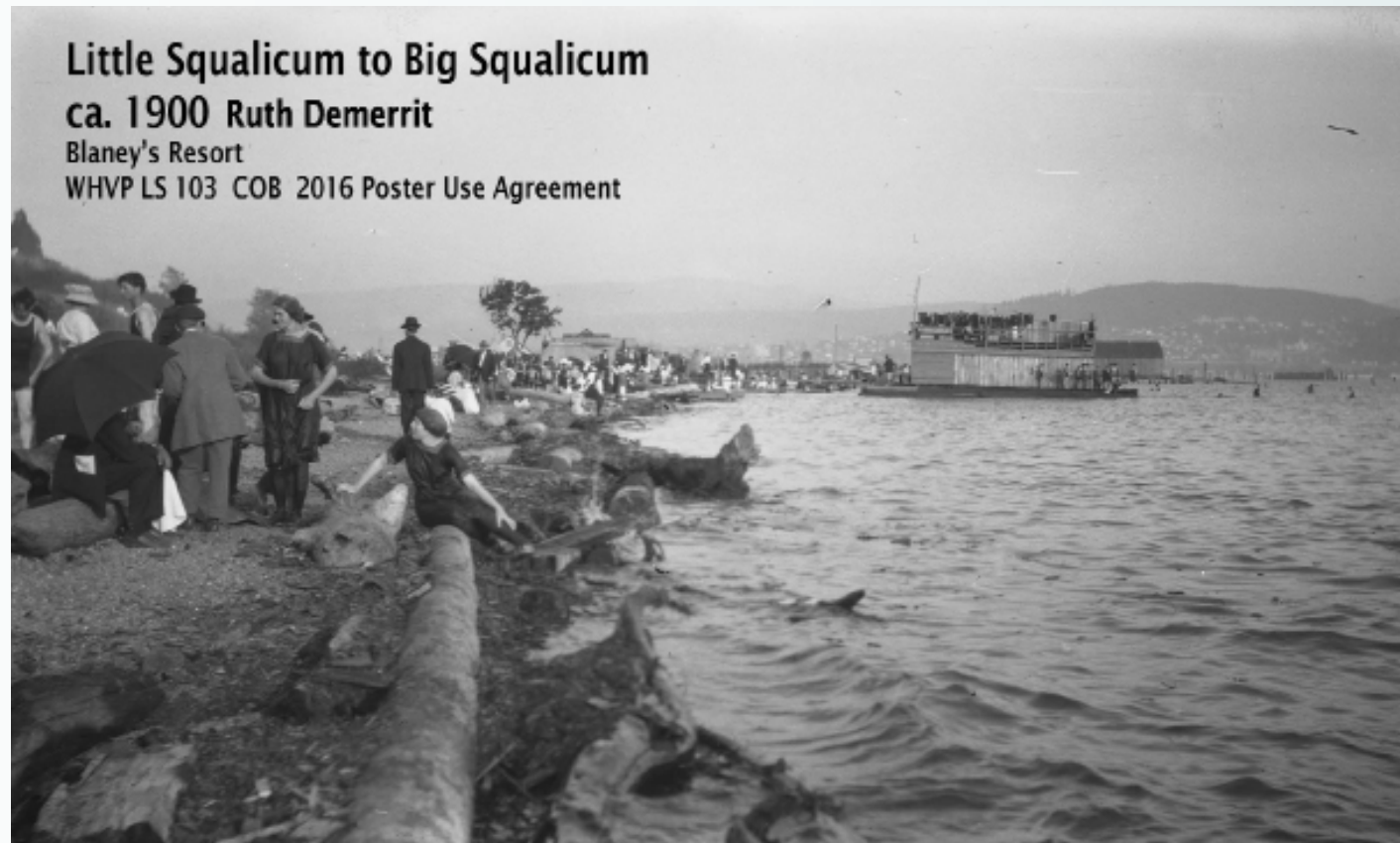
Photo courtesy of Lou Nicksic

Project funding:



Little Squalicum over the years

1900s



Little Squalicum to Big Squalicum
ca. 1900 Ruth Demerit
Blaney's Resort
WHVP LS 103 COB 2016 Poster Use Agreement



Little Squalicum Lagoon Project Site
c. 1952 TR Wahl
WHVP LS 101
2016 COB Poster Use Agreement

Photo courtesy of Tim Wahl

Photo courtesy of Tim Wahl

PRE-PROJECT



Aerial view of Little Squalicum Park, 2014



Little Squalicum Creek outlet, 2014

POST-PROJECT



Location of new estuary in Little Squalicum Park

CONCEPT B - LITTLE SQUALICUM CONFLUENCE

