

# Native Plant Trail



## Welcome

### Enjoy learning about the native plants and wildlife.

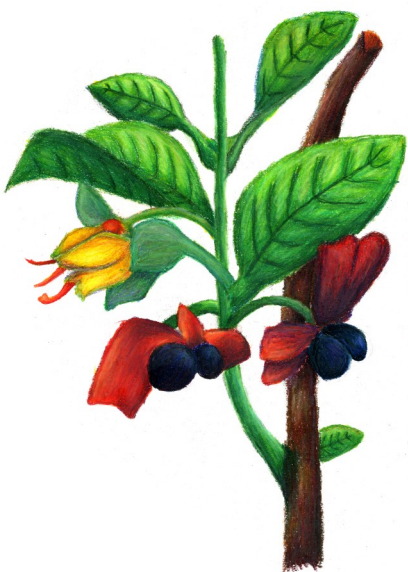
This trail travels along Whatcom Creek through riparian habitat. A healthy riparian habitat helps water and wildlife by:

- ✳ stabilizing stream banks
- ✳ filtering sediment and pollutants
- ✳ improving fish and wildlife habitat by providing shade, cover, food and places to raise young

Visit the trail throughout the year to experience the seasonal changes of native plants and wildlife. Remember staying on the trails helps keep this habitat healthy.

## What is a native plant?

*Washington native plants are those species that occur or historically occurred within the state boundaries before European contact based upon the best available scientific and historical documentation.*



## Native Plant Signs



**Ethnobotany** - highlights traditional uses of the plant by native people

**Habitat Value** - briefly describes the plant's value to wildlife

**Characteristics** - describes the plant's identifiable features & habitat



## Site History

You are in the traditional lands of the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Indian Tribe. Stated in their distinct, separate Salishan languages:

**Lummi, *Xwlemi'*Chosen: "Ske'lot'ses etse Xwlemi' "**

**Nooksack, *Lhéchelesem*: "Shiyólh Temíxw"**

In both languages this place was named *Xwó̓tqwem*, 'the sound of falling water', because of the falls in the creek here and further upstream. Nooksack and Lummi families used this site as a base for saltwater fishing and gathering, the Nooksack arriving by overland trails, the Lummi by water.

## Timeline:

- First nations people harvested food in the estuary.
- Pioneers harnessed Whatcom Creek's falls near the estuary to power a lumber mill from the 1850s to the 1870s.
- Beginning in the 1880s a growing Bellingham used the creek for its garbage, filling the estuary's edges. Later a sewage treatment plant was built on the landfill.
- Park development began in the 1970s by transforming the sewage plant into a salmon hatchery.
- Ongoing environmental restoration by Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and later the City of Bellingham, started in the 1990s, removes invasive plants and continues creating a landscape of native and non-native plants.
- City cleans and caps landfill, expands salt marsh and builds boardwalk, 2004-05.
- Columbia Elementary (1995) and Whatcom Middle School (2010) students created interpretive signs, funded by private donations and government grants.

Sign Project ~ Art by Whatcom Middle School students ~ Text by Washington Native Plant Society & city staff ~ Funding by private donors; grants from the Washington Native Plant Society, City of Bellingham, Department of Ecology ~ The Lummi Nation & Nooksack Indian Tribe shared their names for the plants ~ Graphic design consultation by Tom Barrie

