



Mitigation Opportunities

Silver Creek Watershed

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to improve site selection for compensatory wetland and stream mitigation in the Silver Creek Watershed. The information below summarizes best available science to help developers and consultants **identify appropriate mitigation sites** and **communicate mitigation benefits** in permit applications.

Mitigation Background

Wetlands and streams are shared resources that benefit our community by providing important functions including flood control, ground water recharge, water quality improvements, erosion control, habitat, recreation, and educational opportunities.

In accordance with the City of Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan and its Critical Areas Ordinance, the City protects these functions by requiring developers to follow mitigation sequencing when proposing to impact wetlands and streams.

Mitigation sequencing first requires avoiding impacts followed by minimizing impacts. Compensatory mitigation is the next step in mitigation sequencing and requires unavoidable impacts be offset by creating, restoring, enhancing, or preserving other wetlands and streams.

Watershed Map



Watershed Attributes

- The watershed's major tributaries are Silver Creek Tributary #1, Silver Creek Tributary #2, Bear Creek, and Lost Creek¹.
- The watershed is 16 square miles in size and contains 23 stream miles of fish habitat.
- Coho and residential cutthroat trout are documented as present in Bear Creek and its tributaries.
- Silver Creek, mainstem Bear Creek, and a branch of West Bear Creek are on the 303(d) list for bacteria and/or dissolved oxygen.

Priority Mitigation Actions

The table below lists the priority mitigation actions in Bear Creek¹, Lost Creek¹, Silver Creek Tributary #1¹, and Silver Creek Tributary #2².

x = highest priority (x) = high priority

	Bear Creek	Lost Creek	Silver Trib #1	Silver Trib #2
Increase in-channel habitat quantity		(x)		x
Reconnect and expand floodplain				x
Restore depressional wetland				
Improve in-stream complexity/quality	(x)	(x)		x
Remove stream armor	(x)	x	(x)	x
Restore and enhance riparian buffer		(x)		x
Restore wetland and wetland buffer				
Enhance wetland and wetland buffer				
Protect wetland and wetland buffer	(x)			
Restore upland forest	(x)			
Enhance upland forest		(x)		
Protect upland forest	(x)	(x)	(x)	

¹ Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment (ESA, Veda Environmental, and Northwest Ecological Services, 2015), Tables B-5, B-7 and B-8.

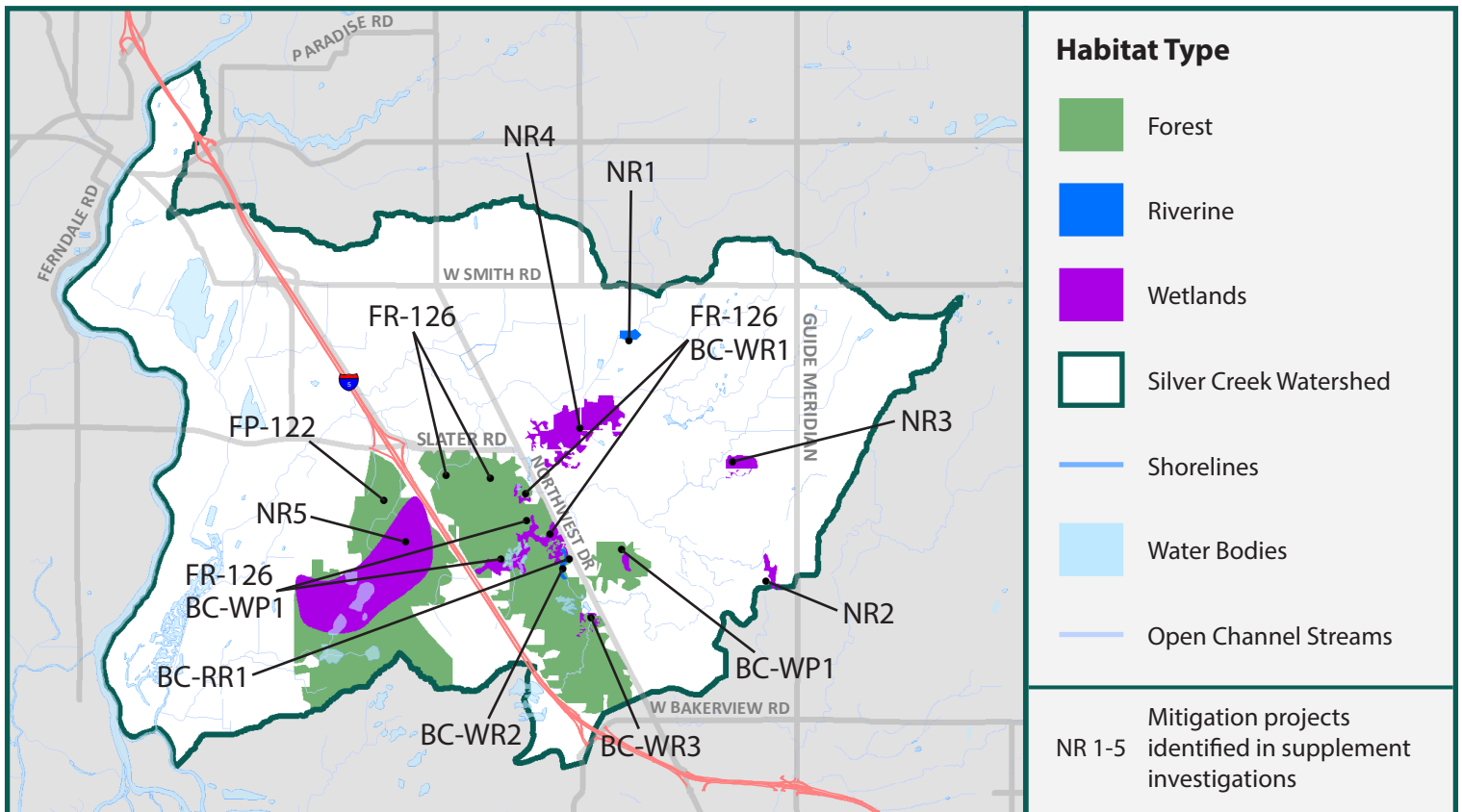
² Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment (ESA, Veda Environmental, and Northwest Ecological Services, 2015), Tables A-5, A-6 and A-7.

Potential Mitigation Projects

The locations and projects listed in the table and map below were identified in the Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment and supplemental investigations. These are only examples, and do not represent all possible mitigation opportunities or guarantee landowner willingness.

For more information, please reference pages 142-144 and Figure 26 in the [Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment](#). The full report can be found by visiting www.cob.org and searching "Restoration Assessment".

Project Type	Location
Protection and restoration of forested north-south wildlife corridor	FR-126, FP-122, BC-WP1, BC-WR2, BC-WR3
Wetland protection	BC-WP1, NR3, NR4, NR5
Wetland enhancement, hydrologic restoration, invasive species removal, native vegetation installation, water quality function improvement	BC-WR1, BC-WR2, BC-WR3, NR2, NR3, NR4
Riparian buffer enhancement, creation and enhancement of floodplain areas, creation of off-channel habitats	BC-RR1, BC-WR2, NR1



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