

# FACT SHEET

Updated 9/2017

## Snohomish County Little Bear Creek Basin Planning Project Assessing Water Quality and Habitat

.....Now and For the Future

### Understanding how to improve water quality conditions with continued growth and changes

#### Overview

Snohomish County has assessed its portion of Little Bear Creek to better understand how to manage stormwater in Little Bear Creek. The Little Bear Creek basin begins in Snohomish County and extends into King County. The study area for this project includes only that portion of the basin located in Snohomish County. This important resource covers 13 square miles and is home to over 5,000 households within Snohomish County. Growth and changes surrounding the Little Bear Creek area may impact the water quality conditions. This study uses continuous runoff modeling to assess the existing conditions and to predict future conditions to assist in developing strategies to protect Little Bear Creek water quality into the future.

#### Goal

- Develop a stormwater management plan

Snohomish County's Surface Water Management Division (SWM) assessed existing stream conditions and projected future stream conditions in order to develop a stormwater management plan for Little Bear Creek (Little Bear Creek Basin Plan). The Little Bear Creek Basin in south Snohomish County supports several species of salmon and trout with valuable water quality and stream habitat.

#### Benefits

- Clean Water Matters

The study provides insight into how to protect and improve the hydrology and water quality in Little Bear Creek for everyone in the community. The study evaluated four water quality components including: dissolved copper, dissolved zinc, bacteria, and water temperature. Changes in any of these components can be harmful to the environment, people or pets in and around the stream. The study also evaluated future biologic conditions as indicated by B-iBI (benthic index of biotic integrity). B-iBI is a measure of stream biologic health.

- Strategy for the Future

The stormwater planning process evaluated and modeled existing conditions in the basin. These results were compared with a modeled future scenario that represents anticipated development according to



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## Little Bear Creek Basin



the county's current Comprehensive Plan. The results of this evaluation assisted Snohomish County in determining appropriate stormwater management strategies and needs to protect and enhance the Little Bear Creek Basin. Proposed strategies include:

- o Structural stormwater control projects,
  - o Voluntary riparian buffer restoration,
  - o Other projects that preserve or improve the stream and its uses.
- Aquatic Resources and Ecology
 

Proper stormwater management ensures our native fish and wildlife have the cold and clean water they depend on to thrive. Healthy stream systems create essential habitat for juvenile salmon and trout. This includes overhanging vegetation, tree roots, and fallen trees along the banks. These conditions help maintain aquatic and streamside insects which are an essential source of food for the ecosystem.

## Timeline

The Little Bear Creek Basin Plan is required under Snohomish County's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) municipal stormwater permit. The plan, developed in accordance with permit requirements, was submitted to the Washington State Department of Ecology in September 2017.



## Public and Stakeholder Outreach

- March 23, 2016: Stakeholder Workshop
- April 19, 2016: Public Open House
- November 2, 2016: Technical Workshop #1
- February 14, 2017: Technical Workshop #2
- June 21, 2017: Public Open House on Draft Basin Plan

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