



**Whatcom County News Release, for Immediate Release, April 25, 2012**

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## **Whatcom County Wins Environmental Project of the Year for Water Quality Improvements in the Lake Whatcom Watershed**

Whatcom County Public Works was awarded the 2012 Environmental Project of the Year by the American Public Works Association (APWA) Washington State Chapter for water quality improvements in Silver Beach Creek near Lake Whatcom. Silver Beach Creek receives increased stormwater runoff and greater peak flows because of the surrounding urbanized landscape, contributing to Lake Whatcom's long history of phosphorus and Fecal Coliform problems.

The award-winning project is designed to improve water quality and reduce flooding in an especially problematic reach of the creek between Brownsville Drive and East 16th Place. Improvements include a reshaped and stabilized stream channel, water quality treatment swales, and stormwater vaults. These improvements reduce erosion, alleviate flooding, promote infiltration and filter phosphorus-containing sediment.

The project was constructed in the summer of 2011 by local contractor Colacurcio Brothers. Construction costs were approximately \$900,000 and shared between local real estate excise tax revenues and a federal EPA grant.

This project is the second of three major water quality improvement projects to be built by Whatcom County Public Works in the Silver Beach Creek community. The final project is slated for construction this summer. This work is part of a coordinated effort between Whatcom County, City of Bellingham, and Lake Whatcom Water & Sewer District to reduce pollutant loading into the lake.



*Flooding prior to construction*



*Vegetated swale after 2011 construction*

Contact: Kirk Christensen, Whatcom County Public Works – Stormwater  
Phone: (360)715-7450

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