Unnaturally high levels of phosphorus in Lake Whatcom are a significant factor leading to algae growth and low oxygen levels. Increased algae may lead to substantially increased drinking water treatment costs and impair aquatic habitat and recreational uses, as well as result in violations of state and federal water quality regulations.

Phosphorus is a nutrient that promotes algae growth in Lake Whatcom. Phosphorus levels can increase in the lake due to runoff from fertilizers, mulches, and soil amendments, as well as from other sources like streets and lawns. To reduce phosphorus levels, it is recommended to use fertilizers, mulches, and soil amendments that are labeled as 0% phosphorus. This helps to prevent algae growth and preserve the health of the lake.

The Lake Whatcom Watershed also includes Sudden Valley and much of the Y Road area. It is important to note that this area is within the Lake Whatcom Watershed but its runoff is piped into Whatcom Creek. Lake Whatcom Watershed restrictions do not apply here.

If you live in the Lake Whatcom Watershed, you may be subject to certain ordinances. These ordinances apply to fertilizers, mulches, and soil amendments on any property. It is important to follow these regulations to protect the health of the lake.

To learn more about the Lake Whatcom Ordinances and how to protect the lake, visit the Lake Whatcom website for full ordinances and information on proper practices.

If you have questions or need assistance, you can contact the following organizations:

- City of Bellingham Public Works: 360-778-7700
- Whatcom County Public Works: 360-715-7450
- Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District: 360-734-9224
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