



A front and back yard makeover improves drainage, reduces maintenance, and protects Lake Whatcom

new designs, new outcomes

How the Koenig’s redesigned outdoor space creates a better place for them to enjoy family and protect a vital community resource

benefits

- ✓ site is 80% mitigated for potential impacts to Lake Whatcom
- ✓ reduced maintenance
- ✓ upgraded patio for entertaining on and underground pollution filter for treating runoff before it enters Lake Whatcom
- ✓ potentially polluted runoff reduced by 65,000 gallons per year

“We didn’t even know we were in the watershed,” Natalie Koenig admitted with a laugh, describing the time she and her husband first purchased their home on Northridge Way near Lake Whatcom. At the time, the Koenigs used the home as a rental property.

Ten years later, Natalie and John moved into the Northridge Way house and began to rethink the design of their outdoor living space as well as its impact on the surrounding environment.

The existing landscape was not ideal—a lot of time was spent maintaining the

lawn and controlling the ivy. “It was a bit of a nightmare,” John said playfully. When they heard about the Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP) from a neighbor, they thought it could be a good fit. A conversation with HIP staff confirmed they were on the right path.

“Staff was a great resource,” Natalie said. “Tremendously knowledgeable, very collaborative, and great at listening.

HIP staff assisted us at every stage of the process.

—Natalie Koenig



HIP staff helped the Koenig's through a major redesign process that used a variety of project options aimed to reduce runoff and maximize their property's ability to protect Lake Whatcom.

The project was broken into two phases. The first replaced over 3,000 square feet of lawn with native landscaping and vegetated berms.

The second phase updated a 250 square foot patio with permeable paving atop a simple pollution filter that mitigates runoff from the roof, deck, and patio areas. The improvements to the landscaping and drainage upgrades combine to treat runoff from nearly two thousand square feet of the property!

A crucial part of the project was the use of native plants. Ayesha Brooksheir from Wild Berry Gardens played a significant role in envisioning a space that was low maintenance, inviting, and environmentally sound.

"Ayesha was great to work with," Natalie said, describing her passion and extensive knowledge of local vegetation. The Koenigs see an opportunity for local businesses to provide even greater options for

native plants that designers like Ayesha can recommend to help ensure that new landscapes thrive and flourish.

Though their vegetation is just in its first season, the Koenigs enjoy watching their new space grow and evolve. They also enjoy learning about the plants that give their outdoor space unique character.

Another important part of the process was the project approval and reimbursement.

Largely guided by HIP staff, the process proved to be streamlined and simple. HIP staff actively helped the Koenigs understand and complete their project planning and approval, as well as receive reimbursement.

"It was a positive experience every step of the way," John said. The Koenigs were reimbursed approximately 30% of their investment.

In the end, the Koenig's reflect back on their experience in glowing terms. "We love our house and we love that we're helping our environment," Natalie said.



invisible benefits

This patio tops a 250 square foot pollution filter that manages runoff from 19% of the property.



Natalie and John Koenig
Lake Whatcom watershed stewards.



A sustainable approach

The Koenigs now spend the majority of their time relaxing and enjoying the native landscaping instead of mowing and fighting the invasive ivy.



QUESTIONS?

Find resources at www.lakewhatcomHIP.org, or request a free site visit to discuss your project options with a local expert. Call (360) 306-4701 or send an email to jcoe@whatcomcd.org.