



Lake Whatcom Homeowner Incentive Program

DIY NATIVE LANDSCAPING PROGRAM HANDBOOK

September 2021

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Introduction

Lake Whatcom, the drinking water source for more than 100,000 Whatcom County residents, has seen a marked decline in water quality over the past 50 years. Excess nutrients, particularly phosphorus, generated by residential properties and conveyed to the lake through drainage systems have caused summer algal blooms and a significant decrease in dissolved oxygen levels in the lake. In April 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized the Lake Whatcom Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study, which sets in motion a 30- to 50-year cleanup effort focused on reducing phosphorus inputs to Lake Whatcom by nearly 87 compared to current conditions.

In order to address this water quality issue, the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County use public funds to manage runoff and clean up stormwater through large-scale stormwater treatment facilities within public rights-of-way. However, much of the developed land in the watershed lies outside of the reach of these infrastructure projects and additional action is necessary to clean up Lake Whatcom. The Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP) was developed to help homeowners make landscape improvements that reduce the amount of polluted runoff leaving their property and flowing downstream to the lake. HIP improvements compliment water quality protection achieved through public stormwater treatment facilities and are an important part of the overall lake clean-up effort.

For more information on Lake Whatcom water quality and other lake management programs visit www.lakewhatcom.whatcomcounty.org.

Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP) Overview

The Lake Whatcom Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP) is a coordinated City of Bellingham (City) and Whatcom County (County) non-regulatory program that provides technical assistance and cost share incentives for homeowners who voluntarily elect to install stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that reduce phosphorus runoff into Lake Whatcom. HIP was originally developed under a Washington State Department of Ecology grant from 2011 to 2015. At the end of this pilot period, the City conducted an extensive program evaluation. Findings from this evaluation were used to develop a revised HIP, which began in 2017. HIP is currently available to owners of developed parcels draining to Lake Whatcom.

HIP offers two levels of assistance to property owners:

- The target program offers a higher level of assistance and financial incentives to owners of shoreline parcels, parcels draining directly to streams, and parcels with large lawns. These properties offer the greatest opportunity for phosphorus reduction.
- The DIY native landscaping program offers technical assistance and reimbursement to install native landscaping on all other parcels in the program area.

Native Landscaping for Water Quality Protection

Converting lawn or traditional residential landscaping to landscaping that uses native plants and mulch is a simple and cost effective method to reduce phosphorus pollution and protect water quality. Native landscaping re-creates the natural soil chemistry and biology found in forested areas. Plants and mulch capture, neutralize, and recycle phosphorus, turning extra nutrients into healthy plants and soil. In addition, up to 40% of rainfall is captured by plants prior to reaching the ground, resulting in less runoff. Less runoff means less potential for pollution flowing downstream into the lake.

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Native Landscaping Program Overview

Owners of properties that drain to Lake Whatcom via a City/County stormwater system and have smaller lawns qualify to participate in the HIP Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Native Landscaping Program. This program helps property owners convert areas of lawn and traditional landscaping into beautiful, low-maintenance native landscaping, including features such as wet gardens, mulch paths, dry creekbeds, and rainwater harvesting systems that provide water to newly installed native plants. While smaller in scale, these DIY Native Landscaping projects are an important part of our collective effort to improve water quality in Lake Whatcom.

HIP native landscaping areas have a thick mulch layer and a minimum density of plants common to forests of the Pacific Northwest. Native plants are generally defined as those found west of the Cascade Range prior to the arrival of European settlers. However, HIP allows flexibility allowing for reimbursement of all plants native to Washington State and their cultivars (plant variety produced in cultivation by selective breeding).



Program Assistance

The HIP DIY Native Landscaping Program offers the following types of assistance:

- Native Landscaping Design Assistance—homeowners receive resources to learn how to design and install a native landscaping project plus a follow up site visit from a native plant expert for one-on-one assistance to develop a planting plan.
- Permit Application Assistance—homeowners receive assistance to complete a HIP project permit application.
- Reimbursement for Approved Materials—the reimbursement budget is \$1.30/square foot of improved area up to a \$6,000 maximum. For example, 1,000 square feet of native landscaped area = \$1,300 reimbursement budget. Reimbursement is available for the actual cost of approved materials including native plants, mulch, cardboard, and other materials necessary to complete a HIP approved project. Up to 50% of labor costs for installation of your project is reimbursable. See reimbursement section for more details.

Program Process

1. Homeowners visit www.lakewhatcomHIP.org, type in their address, and get directed to a page explaining they qualify for the Do-It-Yourself Native Landscaping Program and inviting them to review program information and sign up for a site visit.
2. Homeowners review native landscaping videos and DIY Native Landscaping Program Handbook and Appendices.
3. Homeowners schedule a 2-3 hour site visit with a native plant expert to receive assistance measuring areas, selecting plants, finalizing their native landscaping plan, and completing their HIP application materials. Homeowners may have to wait 1-3 weeks for an appointment depending on homeowner and staff availability.

4. Homeowners complete and submit a HIP native landscaping project application, including the appropriate City permit forms.
5. City staff review the HIP project application, contact homeowners with any questions, and issue a permit if the project meets HIP requirements. It may take up to 2 weeks to receive permit approval.
6. Homeowners purchase materials and install their native landscaping improvements as described in their permitted plan, following City specific permit conditions and keeping all receipts. City staff may inspect during project installation.
7. Homeowners notify HIP staff that the project is complete and schedule a final inspection. Homeowners may have to wait 1-3 weeks for an appointment depending on homeowner and staff availability. During the final inspection, HIP staff will provide assistance if needed with the reimbursement form and provide a maintenance agreement ready for signature.
8. Homeowners complete and submit their reimbursement form and signed maintenance agreement.
9. Homeowners receive their reimbursement check in approximately 3-4 weeks.
10. Homeowners complete the maintenance activities described in the maintenance agreement and watch their new plants grow.

Program Requirements

- Native Landscaping Project Requirements—the native landscaping area installed through HIP must meet the project requirements described below.
- Maintenance Agreement—homeowners must sign a notarized maintenance agreement providing assurances that the native landscaping areas installed through HIP will be preserved and maintained.

DIY Native Landscaping Project Requirements

All HIP native landscaping projects must meet the minimum requirements listed below in order to be eligible for HIP reimbursement.

1. Planting Area Size - The total planting area must cover at least 25% of the parcel's lawn area.

2. Mulch - All planting areas must be covered by at least 4" of low-phosphorus mulch. On slopes, 6" of mulch is recommended. Mulch must be one of the approved low-phosphorus mulches available locally (see HIP DIY Native Landscaping Materials Purchasing Guide Appendix D). Use the formula provided in the planting worksheet in Appendix E to calculate how many cubic yards of mulch you need to cover your area to a depth of 4" and round up to the next whole yard. If you prefer to use Excel, a spreadsheet is available at <https://www.lakewhatcomhip.org/resources-2/> that will calculate these numbers for you. It is good practice to spread mulch thicker than 4" when possible. Thicker mulch does a better job at preventing weed growth and will last longer before needing replenishment.
3. Vegetation Layers - Each unique planting area must include two or three different vegetation layers (tree, shrub, or groundcover). Select one of four options from the planting worksheet (Appendix E):
 - A. Tree, Shrub, and Groundcover
 - B. Tree and Shrub
 - C. Tree and Groundcover
 - D. Shrub and Groundcover
4. Minimum Planting Density - Each planting area must include at least the minimum number of plants (planting density) specified for the vegetation layer option you select. Existing plants should be counted. It does not matter if your existing plants are native or not. Use the planting worksheet provided in Appendix E to calculate the minimum number of plants required for each planting area. If you prefer to use Excel, a spreadsheet is available at <https://www.lakewhatcomhip.org/resources-2/> that will calculate these numbers for you.
5. 90 Native - At least 90% of the new plants installed with your HIP project must be native to Washington State. Different nurseries and websites have different ways of defining native plants. To ensure you are selecting plants that meet HIP program requirements, please use one of the following approved sources to select plants:
 - HIP Native Plant List (Appendix C)
 - King County Planting Plans (Appendix C)

- King County Native Plant Guide—a user friendly, interactive website where you can browse plant photos, search for plants by canopy type or soil moisture conditions and more! <https://green2.kingCounty.gov/gonative/Index.aspx>
6. 10 Non-Native Allowance – Up to 10% of the plants installed with your HIP project may be non-native to Washington State; however, non-native plants are not eligible for reimbursement. Native plant cultivars and two hybrid dogwood varieties-Venus Dogwood and Eddy’s White Wonder Dogwood- are eligible for reimbursement. These plants are noted on the HIP Native Plant list.
 7. Purchasing Materials – Use the HIP DIY Native Landscaping Materials Purchasing Guide (Appendix D) to help you find local businesses that carry native plants, local native plant sales, and other HIP-approved supplies.
 8. Protect Utilities - No trees or shrubs may be planted within 5' of a known utility on private property or within 10' of a known utility in the public rights-of-way.
 9. Protect Septic Systems - No trees may be planted on or adjacent to septic tanks, drainfields, and drainfield reserve areas.
 10. Protect Slopes - Planting areas may not be on or next to a slope >35% with a length of 20 feet or more. If you want to include an area with steep slopes ask for assistance during a site visit.

DIY Native Landscaping Additional Features

In addition to basic native landscaping, you may decide to add additional features to your project.

Wet Gardens

A wet garden is a good solution for areas of your yard where wet soil and mud cause a maintenance problem. Low-lying areas where runoff may pool from time to time can be landscaped without the need for extensive digging or drainage features. Simply follow the native landscaping planting requirement and select plants that will thrive in wet conditions. Ask for recommendations of water-loving native plants during a site visit.

Dry Creekbeds

You can use HIP-approved rock to create pleasing dry creekbed features within your native landscaping area. HIP allows these features for visual appeal with the DIY Native Landscaping Program. They are not intended to manage drainage or to be walkways. You may install drainage systems (e.g., French drains) and walkways, but it will be through a separate permit application.

Dry Creekbeds should be no more than two-feet wide. Think of them as ribbons of rock mulch running through your native landscaping. The rock areas do not need to be planted, but their area must be included as part of the HIP planting plan. Plants not installed in the dry creek bed area must be installed elsewhere on site to maintain compliance with HIP rules for minimum planting density.

Simply define the area for your creekbed feature, cover with cardboard, install edging as necessary, and place at least 4" of approved rock from the HIP DIY Native Landscaping Material Purchasing Guide (Appendix D). No weed cloth please! It will create long-term maintenance problems. Weeds are easy to pull by hand or try a propane torch to scorch them away.



Project Extras-Materials

If you still have reimbursement budget remaining after purchasing the materials for your native landscaping project (i.e., plants, mulch, rock), you can apply your remaining reimbursement funds to cover material costs for the following project extras.

Deer Protection

Deer can hamper the growth and establishment of new native plants. Typically, plants will recover from minor deer damage and grow large enough to outpace deer browsing. Plants need to be well established to recover. If you need to take action to protect your new native plants from deer, materials for temporary deer fencing or cages are eligible for reimbursement through HIP. Because these protections are intended to be temporary, you will be required to eventually remove the deer fencing or netting as part of your project's long-term maintenance plan.

Edging Materials

Edging materials may be used to keep your mulch in place and separate your native landscaping area from lawn or other landscaped areas. Edging materials are reimbursable through HIP and can be any type of material about 6-8" tall (something that extends high enough to be above the level of your mulch) that functions to hold mulch in place. There are many types of manufactured edging materials available for purchase at home improvement stores or get creative and repurpose logs, boards, or bricks.

Please note retaining walls are not reimbursable through HIP. To keep mulch in place on steeper slopes, simply use edging materials across the slope to hold back the mulch, essentially creating small, level terraces across the slope.



Half logs staked across a steep slope to hold new mulch in place.



Decking boards used as edging with temporary deer fence.

Rain Barrels

Your new plants will need to be watered for one to three years until their roots become established and deep enough to withstand our dry summers. If you install a rain barrel or cistern and connect it to an irrigation system dedicated to your new native landscaping, your materials may be reimbursable through HIP. Check with HIP staff to confirm. Resources are available to help you install a rainwater harvesting system at <https://www.cob.org/services/environment/conservation/Pages/rainwater-harvesting.aspx>.



Rainwater harvesting system installed to water new native plants.

Hiring Help

The DIY program provides free technical assistance to complete a project plan and application materials. The program also provides financial reimbursement for the cost of native landscaping materials and up to 50% of installation labor. Because material costs can use up a large amount of your reimbursement budget, many homeowners choose to do the work of installing the landscaping themselves. If you decide to hire help, here are some tips.

- Remember that up to 50% of the cost of installation labor may be reimbursable through HIP. Total reimbursement can not exceed your reimbursement budget of \$1.30 per square foot of your native landscaping project.
- You are responsible for providing instructions to anyone you hire to assist you with your HIP project to comply with HIP requirements. Please share any applicable information in this binder.
- HIP-certified professionals have been trained for the target program and have not received training for the DIY program. You are responsible for providing HIP program information with a HIP-certified professional.
- Often the level of help needed to install a HIP project (i.e., spread mulch and dig holes) can be provided by a teenage neighbor or young adult in need of a part time job. The Western Washington University student employment center is one way to find this type of assistance: http://www.finaid.wvu.edu/studentjobs/employers/non_wvu/index.php.
- In general, companies that offer landscaping services have the skills required to help you install your project. Again, please share any applicable information in this binder.

Designing Your Native Landscaping Project

Use the information and resources provided online and during a site visit to design a native landscaping project that fits your property and your needs. Follow these basic steps to get started.

1. Identify Planting Areas - Use the Landscaping with Native Plants handbook (Appendix B) for guidance on evaluating your unique landscape and identifying areas where native landscaping is a good fit for your property. Look for areas of lawn to convert to native landscaping or areas of existing landscaping where you can add native plants and mulch. Areas at the base of slopes, where water would flow off your property, are

another location to consider for native landscaping. Identify unique planting areas to convert to native landscaping on your property. A unique planting area has a different sun exposure or different vegetation layer combination than other planting areas.

2. Identify Right-of-Way Planting Areas - For most properties, an area of the front yard is located in the road right-of-way. Rights-of-way usually extend beyond the visible edge of the road into the area landscaped with the front or side yards. Including the right-of-way area as part of your HIP plan is allowed and reimbursable if:
 - a. You already satisfy the minimum planting area size requirements on your property.
 - b. You receive written approval (in the form of an email) from the City contact listed for permit questions (see sample email in the example application, Appendix E)
 - c. No trees are planted in the right-of-way. Select vegetation layer option D Shrub and Groundcover Only.
 - d. Right-of-way planting is a part of your approved HIP permit application.

Please fill out a separate planting worksheet for landscaping in the right-of-way area.

3. Measure Planting Areas - Use the guidance provided in Measuring Areas for Your HIP Project in Appendix H to measure each planting area. Draw each area on your proposed improvements map and label each area in square feet. A box scaled to 100 square feet is included on your basemaps provided to you at a site visit, this can help visually approximate what that area looks like. You need 10 of these to meet the 1,000 square foot minimum.
4. Select a Vegetation Layer Option & Calculate Minimum Plant Numbers - For each vegetation layer option (A, B, C, or D) and the right of way (if applicable), complete a planting worksheet to calculate the minimum number of trees, shrubs, and groundcover plants required for that planting area. Existing plants —both native and non-native— count towards your total number. You are welcomed and encouraged to plant more than the minimum, especially groundcovers and perennials.
5. Select Your Plants – Here are suggestions to help you select plants that will work well for your planting area(s):
 - Use the King County planting plans (Appendix C) that match the conditions of your planting area (dry/most/wet soils; sunny/part shade/full shade sun exposure).

- Take the HIP plant list (Appendix C) and visit local nurseries and demonstration sites listed in the HIP DIY Native Landscaping Materials Purchasing Guide (Appendix D) to see what the plants look like and decide which ones you like.
- Ask for help selecting plants from the native plant expert at a site visit.
- Select plants that will provide a variety of heights, shapes, and bloom time that match the soil conditions and sun exposure for that planting area.
- Select groups of plants with similar water needs to avoid over or under watering plants.
- Be sure to include evergreen plants for year-round color and soil protection.
- Consider the mature plant size to ensure your new plant has the room it needs to grow.

Once you have decided which native plants you like that will grow well in your planting area(s), fill out the plant list on each planting worksheet.

Getting Help – Site Visits

HIP is partnering with the Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) to provide one-on-one assistance designing your native landscaping project and the help you need to develop a plan that you are happy with and will work for your unique site.

What to Expect

Site visits will last about two hours and consist of walking around your property, looking at your draft plan, sharing your ideas and needs for your native landscaping project, getting assistance selecting plants that are appropriate for the given location, and completing your plant list. You can get specific questions answered on plant selection, maintenance, care, and installation techniques. WCD staff can also provide assistance measuring areas, creating a proposed improvements map, and answer your questions about the HIP application paperwork.

Schedule a Visit

Contact Ryan O'Connor, Lake Whatcom HIP Coordinator at (360) 526-2381 x118 or roconnor@whatcomcd.org.

HIP Project Application and Permits

After you have completed your proposed improvement map showing the location for each of your planting areas and a planting worksheet for each vegetation layer option (A, B, C, or D) and the right of way (if applicable), you are ready to complete the rest of the HIP application forms.

See Appendix E for an example application packet and blank forms. HIP staff will provide you with custom property maps at your site visit. Draw on these maps to make the required maps for your application. See Appendix H for detailed instructions on how to measure areas for your maps.

City of Bellingham residents need to apply for a free stormwater permit to install their HIP native landscaping project. The City of Bellingham requires the following paperwork for a stormwater permit and HIP project approval:

- Stormwater permit application
- Stormwater Management Requirements List II (provided)
- Erosion and Sediment Control Native Landscaping Projects (provided)
- City of Bellingham Director's Exemption (2 copies, provided)
- Written approval to plant in the City right-of-way (if applicable)
- City of Bellingham HIP DIY Native Landscaping Project Application
- Existing conditions map
- Proposed improvements map
- Planting worksheets (one for each planting area)
- Copy of City code 16.80.120, 16.80.150, General Construction SWPP, and Erosion and Sediment Control Considerations and Conditional Plan for Projects Consisting of Lawn Removal (provided)

PERMIT QUESTIONS AND SUBMITTAL:

Refer to the example City of Bellingham application provided in Appendix E when completing your HIP project application. Contact HIP staff listed below with City of Bellingham permit questions or to request permission to plant in the road right-of-way. Submit your application in person, by mail, or scan and email to the HIP staff listed below.

Eli Mackiewicz, Engineering Technician
City of Bellingham Public Works Natural Resources
104 W. Magnolia St., Suite 109
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 778-7742
emackiewicz@cob.org

Installing Your Native Landscaping - Project Phasing

You can install your HIP project in phases to make installation easier. Homeowners may also request reimbursement in two phases as long as a signed maintenance agreement is provided with the phase one reimbursement request. A typical phasing plan is to install the mulch in the summer as phase one then plant during the fall or spring planting windows as phase two. You could also divide your total planting area into two sections and complete one section at a time. Please notify HIP staff if you would like to phase your project and confirm your phasing plan.

Installation Steps

1. More detailed instructions are provided in Landscaping with Native Plants (Appendix B).
2. Locate your utilities to ensure you do not place large plants where their roots will damage water/sewer/gas lines, etc. Call 811 for a free utility locate within public rights-of-way as needed. Make sure you know where the utility lines run on your property.
3. Mark the boundaries or define the shape of your planting area.
4. Place cardboard over all flat areas, leaving existing lawn in place. Removing lawn disturbs the soil, is not a HIP permitted activity, and may trigger special Lake Whatcom watershed regulations. Cardboard and/or a thick layer of mulch will smother the grass without disturbing the soil. Cardboard is not required, but it will be especially helpful if the site is very weedy. Cardboard is not recommended on slopes. Remove tape from cardboard boxes before using. See tips below on where to find cardboard for your planting project.

5. Install mulch over cardboard or directly over lawn to a depth of 4" on flat areas and a depth of 6" on sloped areas. Thicker mulch will last longer and do a better job of smothering weeds.
6. Install irrigation system and rain barrels (optional).
7. Install plants by clearing away mulch and cutting through the cardboard to the native soil. Dig a hole as deep as the roots and twice as wide. Try to keep the mulch out of the planting hole. Planting techniques will vary depending on the type of plant (potted, bare root, plug). See Landscaping with Native Plants (Appendix C) for more detailed instructions on planting different types of nursery plants. Plants will do well in native soil. Adding soil amendments is not recommended or reimbursable. Please contact HIP staff for advice if you discover challenging soil conditions (e.g., clay) when planting.
8. Replace mulch to within 4"-6" of plant stems and trunks.
9. Install temporary deer fencing (optional).
10. Sweep all dirt and mulch off impervious surfaces like driveways, streets, or walkways.

Sources of Cardboard

HIP does not provide a list of cardboard vendors or sources, but here are some tips on how find cardboard for your planting project.

- Ask businesses that sell products that come in large boxes if you can have cardboard from their recycle bin. Bike stores or appliance stores are two good places to ask.
- Use the search term “paper supplies Bellingham” or “packing supplies Bellingham” online to find local businesses that may sell bulk large boxes or rolls of cardboard.

Final Inspection & Reimbursement

Homeowners are responsible for purchasing HIP eligible materials for their project, keeping copies of their receipts, and submitting a reimbursement request form along with a notarized copy of the maintenance agreement after their final inspection.

Final Inspection

A final inspection (or phase one completion inspection) is required for reimbursement. During final inspection, HIP staff will verify that your native landscaping project was installed according to the approved plans provided in your permit application and meets the minimum HIP requirements. HIP staff will provide a copy of the maintenance agreement ready for signature at the final inspection appointment and be available to help answer questions about the reimbursement request form. Contact Ryan O'Connor with the Whatcom Conservation District at (360) 526-2381 x118 or roconnor@whatcomcd.org to schedule your final inspection.

Reimbursement

The HIP DIY Native Landscaping Program provides reimbursement for materials, supplies, and installation labor necessary to install new native landscaping. Note that there is an upper limit to reimbursement calculated as \$1.30 per square foot of project area. Due to the reimbursement limit, it is possible that you will have some out-of-pocket expenses. See the HIP DIY Native Landscaping Materials Purchasing Guide (Appendix D) for information on HIP approved native plants, mulch, and other materials. Be sure to keep copies of all receipts, and make sure that all receipts clearly describe the item purchased. For example, receipts should show the type of mulch purchased and plant names that correlate to one of the approved native plant lists. Purchase HIP project materials in a separate transaction from other non-HIP related items. If this is not possible, please cross off non-HIP eligible materials from the receipt and calculate new totals and sales tax paid for HIP items. A blank reimbursement request form is located in Appendix F.

The HIP DIY Native Landscaping Program provides reimbursement for the following materials:

- All materials listed in the HIP DIY Native Landscaping Materials Purchasing Guide (Appendix D)
- Native plants from the HIP plant list (Appendix C) or as defined in the Materials Purchasing Guide (Appendix D)
- Native plant cultivars and hybrid varieties Venus Dogwood and Eddy's White Wonder Dogwood

- Up to 50% of installation labor costs
- Cardboard
- Mulch from the City of Bellingham Approved Mulch for Use in the Lake Whatcom Watershed list (Appendix D)
- Delivery fees for project materials
- Debris disposal fees (e.g., RDS fee to drop off blackberry canes or weeds removed from your planting area)
- Hand tools and equipment necessary to install the project (restrictions apply for motorized or wheeled equipment, confirm with HIP staff)
- Temporary deer fencing materials around new native planting area
- Edging materials
- Rain barrel materials and temporary irrigation supplies to water new native plants

Final Inspection and Reimbursement Process

1. Homeowner compiles receipts and follows directions provided above to schedule a final inspection.
2. HIP staff conducts final inspection to confirm that improvements meet HIP project requirements, provides a copy of the HIP Native Landscaping Maintenance Agreement ready for signature, and answers questions regarding the reimbursement form as needed.
3. Homeowner calculates total HIP-eligible material costs and completes the reimbursement request form with copies of receipts and a signed, notarized maintenance agreement attached. If requested, free notary services are available at Whatcom County Public Works.
4. Homeowner submits reimbursement request to the City of Bellingham. Reimbursement requests can be scanned and emailed, dropped off in person Monday – Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., or make an appointment. Submit reimbursement request and maintenance agreement to:

Eli Mackiewicz, Engineering Technician
 City of Bellingham Public Works Natural Resources
 104 W. Magnolia St., Suite 109

Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 778-7742
emackiewicz@cob.org

5. City staff process reimbursement requests as quickly as possible and homeowners receive their check within 3 - 4 weeks for eligible expenses at a reimbursement rate of \$1.30/square foot improved area up to \$6,000 maximum.

Maintenance

Native landscaping is very easy to maintain; however, some maintenance is required in order to ensure that your new plants survive and your native landscaping area continues to provide a water quality benefit. New plants will require watering and weeding. Mulch will need to be replenished approximately every five years to maintain a 4 inch depth. For more detail on how to care for your new native landscaping areas, see Landscaping with Native Plants (Appendix C) and the Maintenance Agreement for Water Quality Improvement Projects Through the Lake Whatcom Homeowner Incentive Program (Appendix G).

Noxious Weeds

In some instances, noxious weeds like blackberry or English ivy may invade your new native planting area. It is important to remove these weeds to protect your native landscape. For more information on noxious weeds, visit the Whatcom County Noxious Weed Program website at <http://whatcomcounty.us/914/Weeds>. Browse fact sheets and resources available on the website for assistance identifying and controlling noxious weeds on your property or contact weed program staff with questions.

Reporting and Inspection

As part of the maintenance agreement, HIP staff from the City of Bellingham or Whatcom County may ask homeowners to submit current photos of their native landscaping improvements in order to document that they remain intact and are being maintained or may ask homeowners for permission to check that HIP improvements are still intact as designed and installed.

Staff Contacts

Ryan O'Connor, Lake Whatcom HIP Coordinator
Whatcom Conservation District
roconnor@whatcomcd.org (360) 526-2381 x118

Eli Mackiewicz, Engineering Technician
City of Bellingham Public Works Natural Resources
emackiewicz@cob.org (360) 778-7742

Cynthia May, Environmental Education and Outreach Specialist
City of Bellingham Public Works – Natural Resources
cmay@cob.org (360) 778-7711

Appendices

Note that all appendices may be found on the HIP website at:
<https://www.lakewhatcomhip.org/resources-2/>

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