

## Exploring Whatcom Streams

Whatcom County has an abundance of streams, lakes, wetlands and aquifers. In the “Water Bugs” activities you have been encouraged to visit some local streams to study macro-invertebrates. You will find that many of the streams listed here appear fairly similar in their features. Apart from just helping you define what a healthy stream looks like, there is a scientific reason for suggesting you sample at similar streams. Can you guess what that reason is?

Listed below are a few local streams in publicly accessible areas. While we attempted to find various locations around the county, several are located closer to Bellingham. Please read the [safety guidelines](#) before planning a field trip to one or more of these streams, and as a rule of thumb remember *nature is unpredictable*, (streams will vary based on season, rain fall, etc.) Use good judgment in selecting and using a sampling site.

***If you are a property owner interested in hosting a field trip to a stream on your property, please let us know at the WSU Extension Office.***

### PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE STREAMS



#### **KENDALL CREEEK**

Take Hwy 542 north and west out past Deming. (if you are coming from I-5) Take a right on Hatchery Road just past the Northfork Brewery. Look for the WDFW sign “Kendall Creek Hatchery.” From the parking lot walk west, down past the hatching ponds. Look for a gate in the chain link fence on the west side of the property. Pass through the gate. Straight ahead is a small tributary (seasonal) of the Nooksack River which is usually dry in the summer. If it is running, it is shallow and a good option for younger members. To the right as you enter, about 20 yards away, is Kendall Creek.



### **SPRING CREEK**

This neglected gem is hidden away in the heart of Bellingham's mall district. Litter and vandalism make it a good candidate for a service project. Going North on Meridian from I-5 turn right on Prince Avenue, just past Bakerview. About a quarter mile on Prince you will see a small metal bridge with ample side street parking (not the bridge in the picture). Access the unmarked foot

trail by stepping over the bridge guardrail on the southwest end of the bridge. The trail is not ADA accessible, it has stairs, and there are insulated electric cords that have come uncovered so keep your eyes open. The stream is at the bottom of a lot of stairs and runs quietly under a foot bridge.

### **SQUALICUM CREEK**

Take the Meridian exit off I-5, drive west (away from the mall, towards downtown). Take a right onto Squalicum Parkway at the second light. In about 3/4 miles there is parking on your right. (The somewhat invisible Squalicum Creek Park.) After you park, come back to the road and cross on the crosswalk. The creek runs alongside the road and has a few good points of entry to the left, about five to ten yards away.



### **PADDEN CREEK**

Take the Old Fairhaven Parkway exit (Hwy 11) off I-5. Stay on this road past a couple lights (1.5 miles or so), the road eventually curves and turns into 10th and takes you into Fairhaven. As the road curves you will see a couple yellow park boundary markers. You can get to the stream from here but the easiest way to the stream is to keep driving, turn left on Mackenzie and park down near the Bellingham Tennis Club. Between the back of the tennis club and the back of the building to the South of the BTC there is an unmarked foot path that goes down to the main trail. Look for a plaque that says "Spanish Chalice Found Here." on the ground. Just to right of this plaque is a path that goes down to the stream. This path isn't quite as steep as in other places. Slippery when wet!

## **CHUCKANUT CREEK**

Take the Old Fairhaven Parkway exit (Hwy 11) off I-5. Stay on this road past a couple lights (1.5 miles or so) and turn left (away from Fairhaven) at 12th Street. The road forks when you cross the Padden Creek bridge, and you will want to bear left onto Chuckanut Drive. About 1 mile further the road branches again and again you want to go left. Signs and parking for the Arroyo Park Reserve will be on your right, try the second parking area up the road.



## **WHATCOM CREEK**

Whatcom Falls Park is a vast and beautiful park with several good spots to take samples. Depending on the time of year, though, the current can be pretty powerful.

Take the Lakeway Drive exit from I-5 and head East. (Civic Field and an elementary school will be on your left). Pass Yew street, go about half a mile, and the next light will be Kenoyer / Silver Beach. Turn left into the first entrance to Whatcom Falls Park.

From the parking lot, listen for the sound of the waterfall, and follow it. Cross the bridge and then go either direction to reach accessible streams. Going left onto Lower George Trail will take you close to a more gentle stream edge.