Parking Lot Retrofits, Social Marketing, and Outreach in Bear and Little Bear Watersheds

Snohomish Conservation District (SCD) helped address the issue of contaminated parking lot runoff in the Bear and Little Bear Watersheds through social marketing, education, and installation of Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI).

Project outcomes

SCD conducted outreach to business owners in the Bear and Little Bear watersheds. The information gained through this outreach was compiled into social marketing and commercial outreach reports. These reports detailed the challenges and potential solutions for recruiting commercial landowners interested in installing GSI to reduce pollution from parking lot runoff. This project also resulted in the installation of two parking lot retrofits that will help improve water quality in these watersheds.

Success stories

SCD installed one parking lot retrofit project at the City of Woodinville’s public works building and another at a private site in unincorporated Snohomish County. Due to the pandemic, we were not able to invite people to attend the planting events associated with these projects, but we were able to livestream them so that the public could learn about the process and the importance of GSI.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The reports developed through this project have been shared with the 12 Puget Sound conservation districts and the Washington State Conservation Commission Center for Technical Development. The lessons learned can help conservation districts and other agencies to improve their chances for success with commercial GSI. It will also inform future SCD projects.

Outreach to businesses can be challenging, but GSI projects in commercial areas are highly impactful. Parking lot GSI projects are especially visible and can remediate polluted water carrying vehicle fluids and vehicle particles. Because GSI projects often include installing vegetation, they help beautify areas, attract attention, and provide an opportunity for education. With each successful project installation, public awareness increases and so does the likelihood that more businesses will adopt these practices.

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