

# Tenmile Treasures

A Newsletter for the Tenmile Creek Watershed Community

TENMILE CREEK  
WATERSHED

Healthy Streams  
Neighbor to Neighbor

## Welcome to Tenmile Treasures

This is the very first issue of Tenmile Treasures, the newsletter for the Tenmile Creek watershed community. The Tenmile Creek watershed is the living space for many treasures - we have 65 miles of streams including Tenmile Creek, Fourmile Creek, Deer Creek, Crystal Springs, and many other small tributaries and springs. Our treasures include coho, fall chinook, chum, steelhead and cutthroat trout. We have 35 square miles of land in our watershed with many made up of rich fertile soil. We are home to diverse plants, trees and flowers.

Our greatest treasure, however, is you! Yes, you are a Tenmile Treasure. Together we can enjoy and protect what we have. We can make the decisions that will keep our watershed healthy, but allow us to enjoy and work our land. We are each very unique with a different history and story to tell. We can learn from each other and together we can have Healthy Streams: Neighbor-to-Neighbor.

## A Little Science

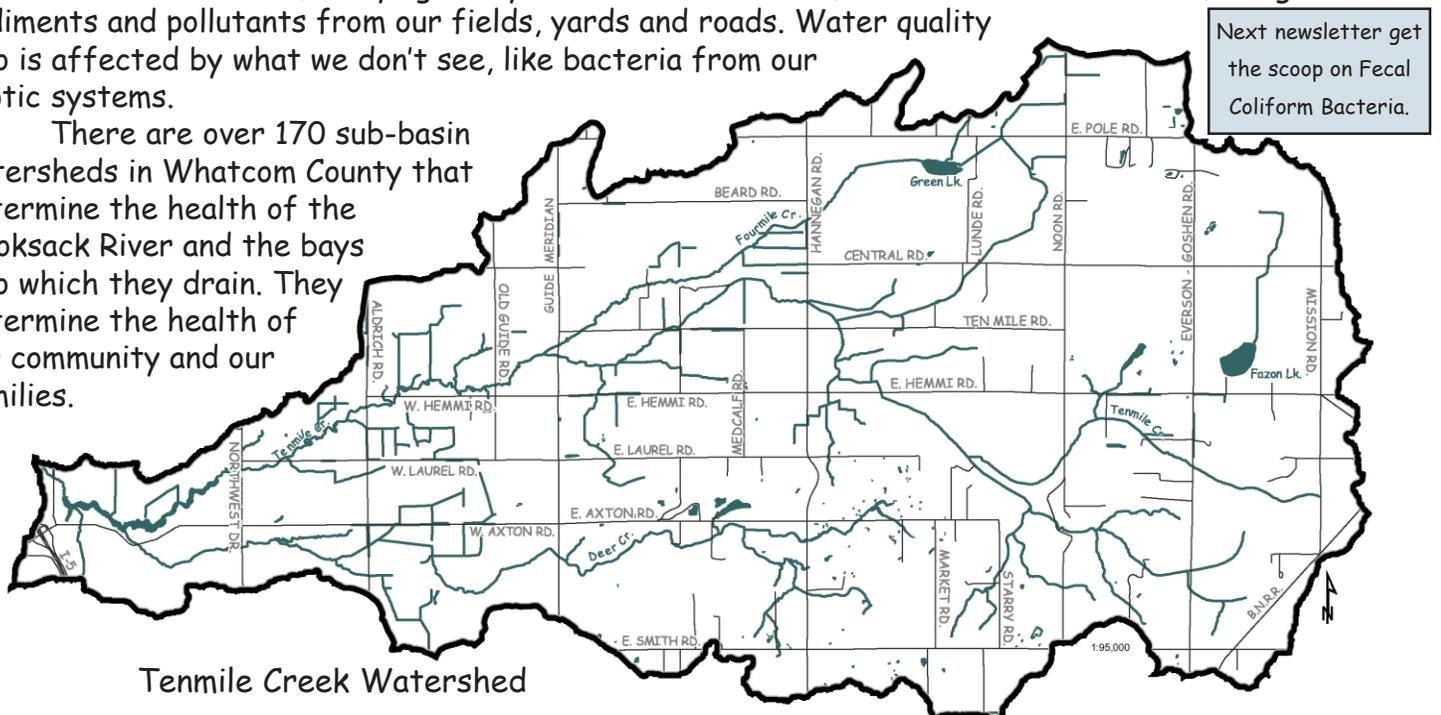
What is the Tenmile Creek Watershed?

The term "watershed" describes an area of land that drains down slope to the lowest point. The water moves either underground or on the surface. Generally these pathways converge into a stream or river. For our drainage area, that is the Tenmile Creek. The Tenmile Creek watershed is one small sub-watershed that is part of the larger Nooksack River watershed.

Connectivity is a term that refers to the physical connection between tributaries and the river. In our watershed connectivity refers to the physical connection between Fourmile Creek, Deer Creek and Crystal Springs to Tenmile Creek, and the connection between these systems and the Nooksack River and Portage Bay. It also refers to the connection between surface water and groundwater and between wetlands and these water sources. Because water moves downstream in a watershed, any activity that affects the water quality, quantity, or rate of movement at one location can change the characteristics of the watershed at locations downstream and/or upstream. For this reason, everyone living or working within a watershed has connectivity to everyone else. Cooperation is needed to ensure good watershed conditions. This is important for the health of the stream as well as for the landowners that live near and use that natural resource.

Fish and small insects travel through streams . . . but live in watersheds. 99% of what happens in a stream is affected by what occurs outside of its banks - - in the watershed. The water level in Tenmile Creek rises from rain hitting every square inch of area within the boundaries of our watershed. Water quality is affected by the amount of impervious surface in our watershed. Paved and compacted surfaces prevent rainwater from passing through a natural cleaning process. A porous, vegetated surface can filter pollutants from water before that water enters Tenmile Creek. Chemicals from rubber and oil, carrying heavy metals from our cars, affect watershed health, along with sediments and pollutants from our fields, yards and roads. Water quality also is affected by what we don't see, like bacteria from our septic systems.

There are over 170 sub-basin watersheds in Whatcom County that determine the health of the Nooksack River and the bays into which they drain. They determine the health of our community and our families.



Next newsletter get  
the scoop on Fecal  
Coliform Bacteria.

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### Tenmile Advisory Committee

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Kevin Sterk, Landowner  
Dan Thompson, Landowner  
Mike Murphy, Landowner/PUD  
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