

**The Puget Sound Partnership  
ECO Net PSSH Block Grant**

**Name of Local ECO Network:** Whatcom Watersheds Information Network

**Local ECO Network Coordinator submitting this application:** Becky Peterson

**Fiscal Sponsor:** Sustainable Connections

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**Project Title:** *Puget Sound Starts Here Project Fair*

**Geographic service area:** Whatcom County

### **2014 Puget Sound Starts Here Project Fair**

Whatcom Watersheds Information Network (WWIN) is a network of representatives from government agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and citizens who are involved and interested in marine and fresh water ecosystems, and natural resources education and outreach. As the local ECO Net chapter, WWIN's primary mission is to support and improve watershed education, stewardship, information exchange, and public involvement efforts in Whatcom County, ultimately improving the health of Puget Sound.

With Puget Sound Partnership support complementing existing funding from The Russell Family Foundation, Sustainable Connections will convene a Puget Sound Starts Here Project Fair in collaboration with WINN members. The Project Fair will provide a visible, collaborative hub for WINN's mission while building on Puget Sound Partnership recommendations and research, and promoting the Puget Sound Starts Here campaign to drive individual behavior change. Engaging public and private partners, the Project Fair will increase awareness among Whatcom County residents about local issues and recovery efforts designed to reduce polluted surface water runoff entering Puget Sound from critical freshwater bodies, and provide tools and strategies to be part of the solution.

Offering a fun and informative day of community education, outreach, and engagement, the Project Fair will highlight local projects, organizations and opportunities to reduce stormwater pollution. Area residents attending this free, easily accessible, family-friendly event will adopt broad-scale stewardship practices and behaviors that benefit Puget Sound. This format builds upon the success of Sustainable Connections' 2013 Low Impact Development Project Fair, where nearly 60 Lake Whatcom Watershed residents learned about incentives and met industry professionals skilled in helping property owners reach stormwater pollution reduction goals. Planned for May as part of Puget Sound Starts Here Month, the Project Fair will capture homeowners' interest and increase knowledge prior to the typical home improvement season and City approved building window, enabling homeowners to incorporate impactful solutions into their summer projects.

**Project goals & activities:** The project Fair will support public engagement and stewardship strategies, fostering broad-scale actions to address polluted water, degraded land and habitat, and imperiled species. Utilizing Puget Sound Partnership's integrated three-pronged strategy as a regional approach to public stewardship of Puget Sound, project goals are to:

- Change Practices and Behaviors
- Build Issue Awareness and Understanding
- Change Social and Institutional Infrastructure

Specific Puget Sound Starts Here Project Fair activities will be finalized in consultation with project partners, and will likely include:

- Environmental education/ interactive games and activities for children (COB/NSEA)
- Tours of raingardens and other LID opportunities for homeowners (SC/RE Sources)
- Business expo connecting homeowners with capable local professionals (including contractors, landscape designers, and material suppliers) available to help create "stormwater smart" landscape and drainage features (SC)
- Promote local programs and organizations offering resources or education on reducing polluted stormwater (all partners)

- Outreach and education to the general public around LID incentives and opportunities (COB/SC)
- Provide hands on workshops for DIY projects for homeowners, ex. build your own rain barrel, how to construct a raingarden, raingarden maintenance 101, etc. (WSU)
- Showcase connections among water resources for industry, recreation and a healthy ecosystem by having speakers and tabling opportunities for representatives from those industries (NSEA/ RE Sources)
- Feature local, sustainable food producers showcasing our place and what it produces
- Provide educational materials for distribution including PSSH campaign collateral as well as local resources including the [LID Resource Guide](#) (all partners)
- Highlight local business taking action to reduce stormwater as Downtown Improvement Garden Stewards (SC)
- Highlight the Greenroads projects and other City of Bellingham innovations toward reduced stormwater pollution (COB)
- Inform the public on Waterfront Utility Master Plan and other innovative long range planning activities
- Provide resources for Bay to Baker concepts

**Target audience** – General public throughout Whatcom County communities. A marketing and media plan will include promotion outlets such as WINN membership, newsletters, print advertising, event listing and websites.

**PSSH Campaign goals addressed:** *Rekindle an emotional connection between area residents and Puget Sound* - Project Fair messaging will appeal to Whatcom County residents' values and sense of place by including messaging that we are all connected by our area's (seemingly) bountiful water resources - from Baker to the Bay. *Increase PSSH brand awareness from 26% to 50%* - All branding and marketing for the event will implement the Puget Sound Starts Here regional media efforts to complement and support our local campaign efforts. This may include both traditional print media and social media. Partners incorporating Puget Sound Starts Here campaign messages and brand will be integrated into event communications to increase issue relevance and local identity. *Position PSSH as connector for residents to a healthy Puget Sound* - The Project Fair will give area residents an opportunity to learn about and make the connection between salmon recovery, recreational opportunities to cumulative impacts of stormwater and what opportunities there are for taking action through stewardship. *Reinforce the umbrella PSSH brand to unite the regional and local efforts of partner organizations* - Whatcom County organizations promoting and participating in the Project Fair will collaboratively build issue awareness and understanding to increase public support and engagement in recovery actions.

**BMPs addressed:** This event will coordinate and support implementation of education and outreach plans associated with urban landscapes (potential impacts and best management practices to address impacts). BMPs related to infiltration, pollution reduction, habitat improvement, forest cover, soil development, critical area protection, shoreline function and other priority issues will be addressed as priorities for the Nooksack Watershed. These were chosen based on Action Agenda prioritization, problem severity, problem frequency, availability of and confidence in science, and ability to influence change.

**Collaboration and effective partnerships:** Working closely with regional partners, Sustainable Connections will facilitate local implementation of Puget Sound Partnership’s action agenda, focusing on the “Prevent pollution from urban stormwater runoff” strategic initiative. Many local organizations and WINN members have a mission related to education and outreach for Puget Sound stewardship. This Project Fair will be inclusive of all organizations with capacity to participate. While exact roles for partner organizations will be determined in early 2014, Sustainable Connections will act as the primary convener. Likely partners are listed below, and examples of roles and involvement are listed in the “Project Goals and Activities” section, above. ***Sustainable Connections (SC)*** is a nonprofit membership organization of 600 independent businesses and community leaders who envision a thriving, collaborative community in which local businesses are prosperous and contribute to a healthy environment and the well-being of all citizens. Programs focus on delivering education, connections, and market development activities, building upon the natural stewardship that local business owners have for their own community. The Green Building & Smart Growth program (an active and model branch of Cascadia Green Building Council) promotes healthy, durable, efficient, and environmentally responsible homes, neighborhoods and workplaces through education, technical assistance and advocacy. This and other programs are proven to change behavior. An Independent [study](#), shows that 69% of Bellingham area residents are familiar with SC’s Think Local First program, and 3 in 5 local households have changed their purchasing behavior to Think Local *First!* SC will provide project management, event coordination, and marketing support. ***City of Bellingham (COB)*** and ***Whatcom County (WC)*** provide information about local incentives and programs for water quality and conservation. ***RE Sources for Sustainable Communities (RE Sources)*** offers technical assistance trainings for businesses, and encourages public involvement and stewardship through educational events and volunteer programs. ***Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA)*** environmental education programs focus on salmon and stream ecology in Whatcom County. Programs provide students with opportunities to learn about salmon and watershed through inquiry-based science lessons and to get out in the field and participate in hands-on salmon habitat restoration projects in their local watershed. ***Whatcom County WSU Cooperative Extension (WSU)*** partners with [Washington Sea Grant](#) to ensure that these resources are available to support the economic and environmental well-being of our community through research, education, and outreach.

**Project Evaluation:** Project Fair evaluation and assessment of impacts will be gathered by a post-event report including participation numbers, new business opportunities developed for implementing BMPs, and increase in local incentives uptake. Further information may be gathered by a post event survey of attendees and participating organizations to collect feedback, inform lessons learned, and clarify future activities.

**Project timeline:** February 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014

- **February:** Convene meetings with potential partners and collaborators for interest.
- **March:** Develop scope of work, assign specific roles and prepare draft budget.
- **April:** Begin public marketing and outreach. Continued event planning.
- **May:** Final event prep, robust marketing and host PSSH Project Fair.
- **June:** Prepare post event evaluation report and finalize event budget actuals.

**Estimated Budget**

Please list costs associated with the proposed project under the following categories, using the template provided below.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Requesting from PSP</b>	<b>ECO Network or Organizational Match</b>	<b>Overall Project Budget</b>
Project Coordination/Management (Staff salaries, benefits)	6,000	1,500	7,500
Travel	n/a		
Goods, Services, and Supplies	2,500	1,000	3,500
Indirect costs (Not to exceed 15%)	1,500	350	1,850
<b>Totals</b>	10,000	2,850*	12,850

\*To be finalized with ECO Net partners.

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, the local ECO Network Coordinator, certify that the application submitted was developed by a collaborative group decision process as described in the RFP.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*