



Lake Whatcom Management Program Five-Year Work Plan

Preparation for 2025-2029 Work Plan Programming and Publication

February 2024





Prepared by the Lake Whatcom
Interjurisdictional Coordinating Team

Lake Whatcom Management Program 2020-2024 Work Plan

March 2020



June JPG

Proposed
Outline

Policymaker
Input

Q+A w/Experts
Staff Reports

September JPG

Final Draft

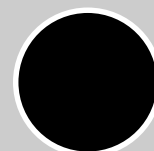
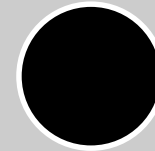
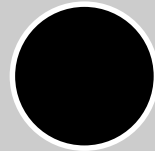
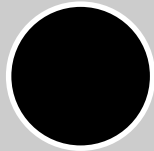
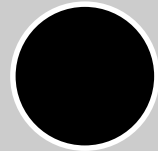
Summary of Public
Input

Today

Introduction

Process
Discussion

Summary of
Program Areas



Spring 2024

Internal
Coordination

Questions
“Homework”

Summer 2024

Draft for Public
Comment

Coordination
with Ecology

Winter 2024

Council(s) and
Commission
Adoption

Final
Publication



Lake Whatcom Management Program: Ten Program Areas

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Land Preservation | 6. Recreation |
| 2. Stormwater | 7. Aquatic Invasive Species |
| 3. Land Use | 8. Utilities & Transportation |
| 4. Monitoring & Data | 9. Education & Engagement |
| 5. Hazardous Materials | 10. Administration |

**PROPOSED NEW Actions and Metrics:
Climate Action (2025-2029 Work Plan)**

Program Area 1: Land Preservation

Overview –Current Activities

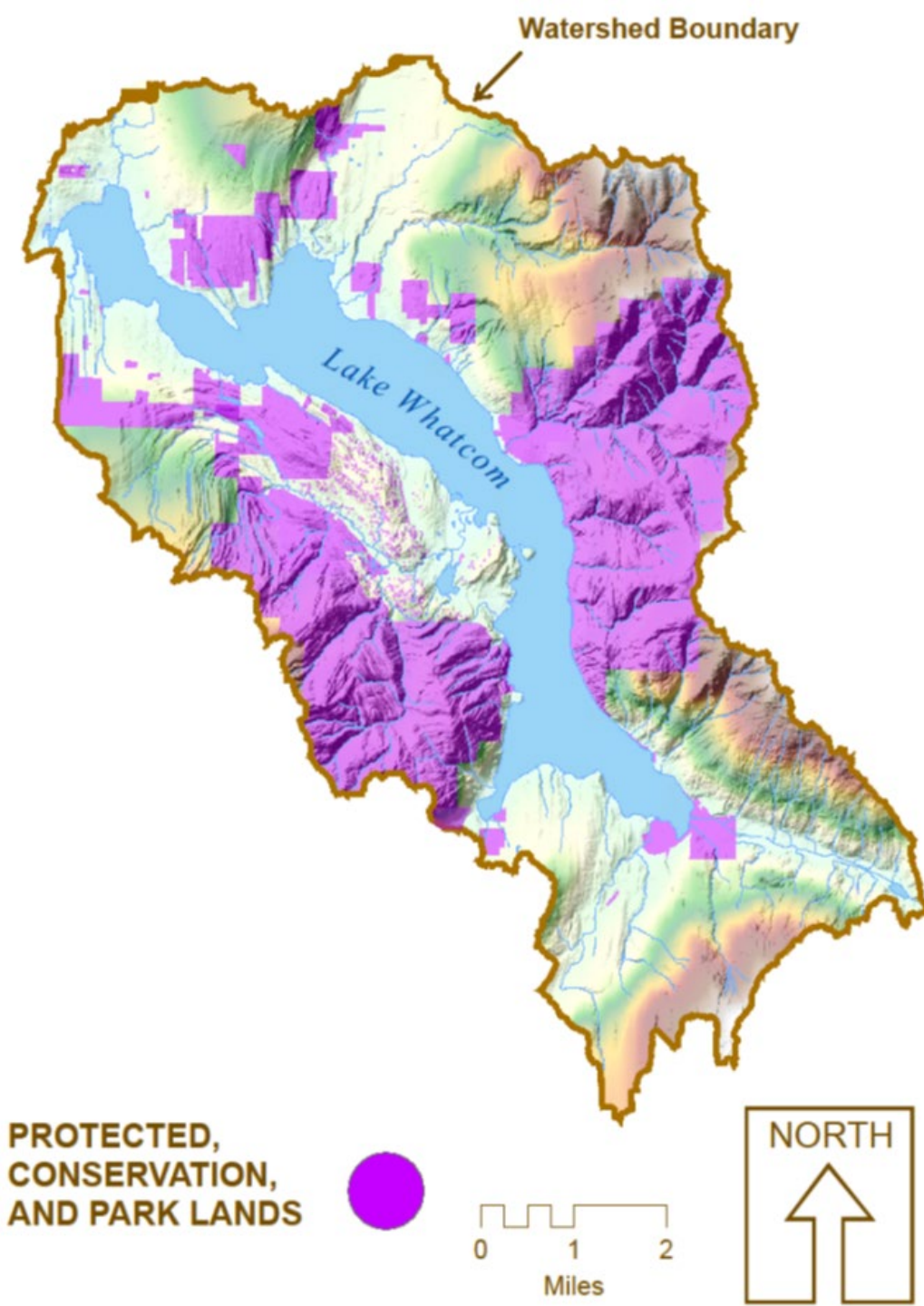
Purchase/restore watershed lands for permanent protection

- Property Acquisition Program
- Re-conveyance lands
- Galbraith Mountain easement

Preservation/restoration of forested processes

- Tree planting and invasive species management
- Riparian restoration
- Forest road decommissioning
- Forest health and successional growth

Wildfire Preparedness



Program Area 2 Stormwater

Overview – Current Activities

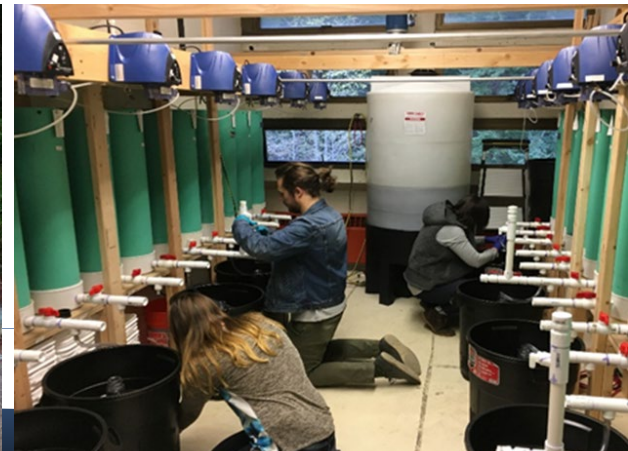
Capital stormwater system construction / retrofits

Public infrastructure maintenance

Support for residential projects (HIP and NNLP)

Research and studies re: effectiveness and efficiency

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) response



Program Area 3

Land Use

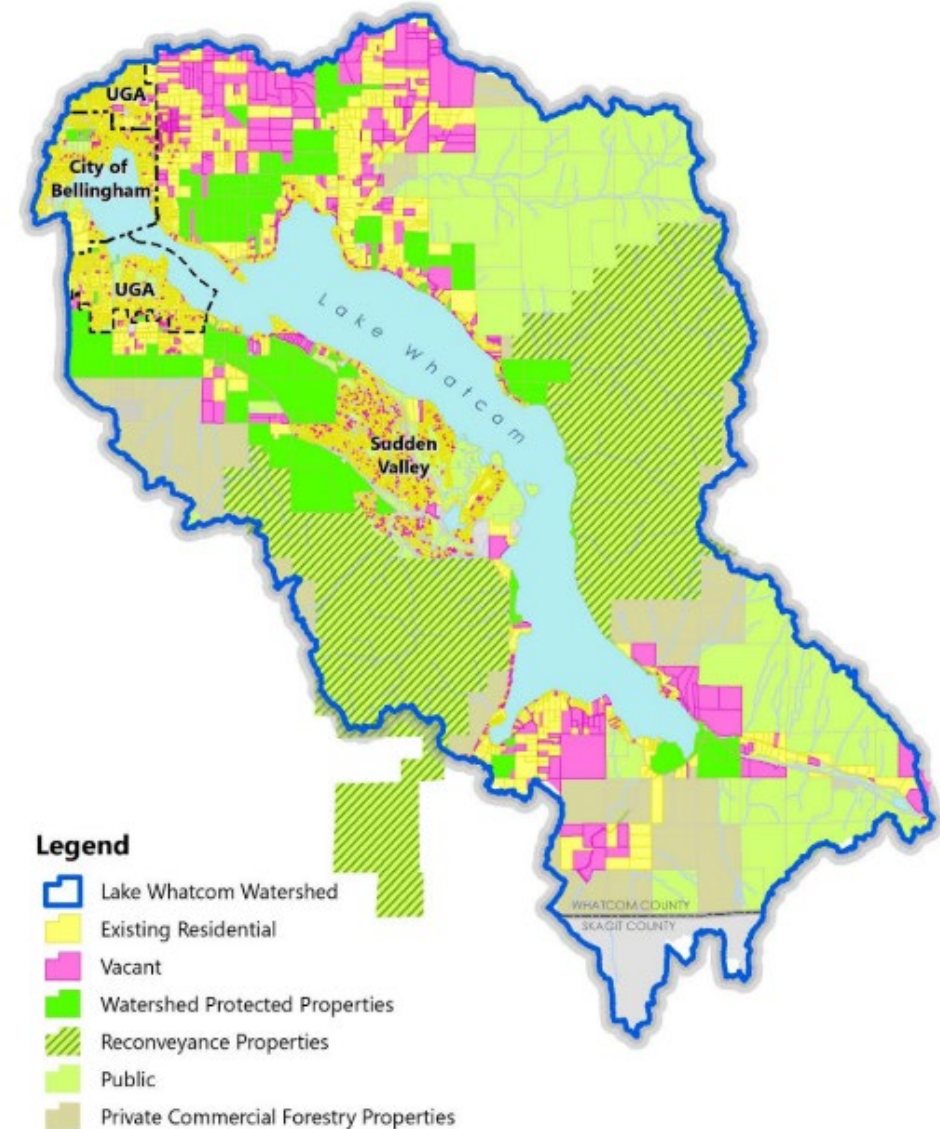
Overview – Current Activities

City Regulations (BMC 15.42 / 16.80) apply to over 450 acres

County Regulations (WCC 20.51) apply to over 3,100 acres

Sudden Valley Stormwater Management Plan and covenants applicable to 2,300+ lots

City/County staff track Forest Practice Applications



Program Area 4

Monitoring and Data

Overview – Current Activities

Western Washington University Institute for Watershed Studies monitors the water quality of the Lake and tributary streams

Professional consultant monitors tributary streams

Department of Ecology partnership for TMDL compliance

Lake Whatcom Data Team identifies data gaps and manages ongoing research to fill these gaps



Program Area 5 Hazardous Materials

Overview

Focus on preventing and responding to spills or overuse of chemicals that might harm water quality

City & County receive reports of stormwater issues, including spills (Stormwater Hotline, website)

Crews and trained staff respond to reports and oversee cleanup

Includes phosphorus-containing materials, such as fertilizer, for disposal outside of the watershed

TAG IT & TAKE IT



MAKE A PLAN FOR PROPER DISPOSAL

Protect the health and safety of your loved ones and the environment by properly disposing of household hazardous waste (HHW) items for free at the Disposal of Toxics Facility (DoT).



Program Area 6

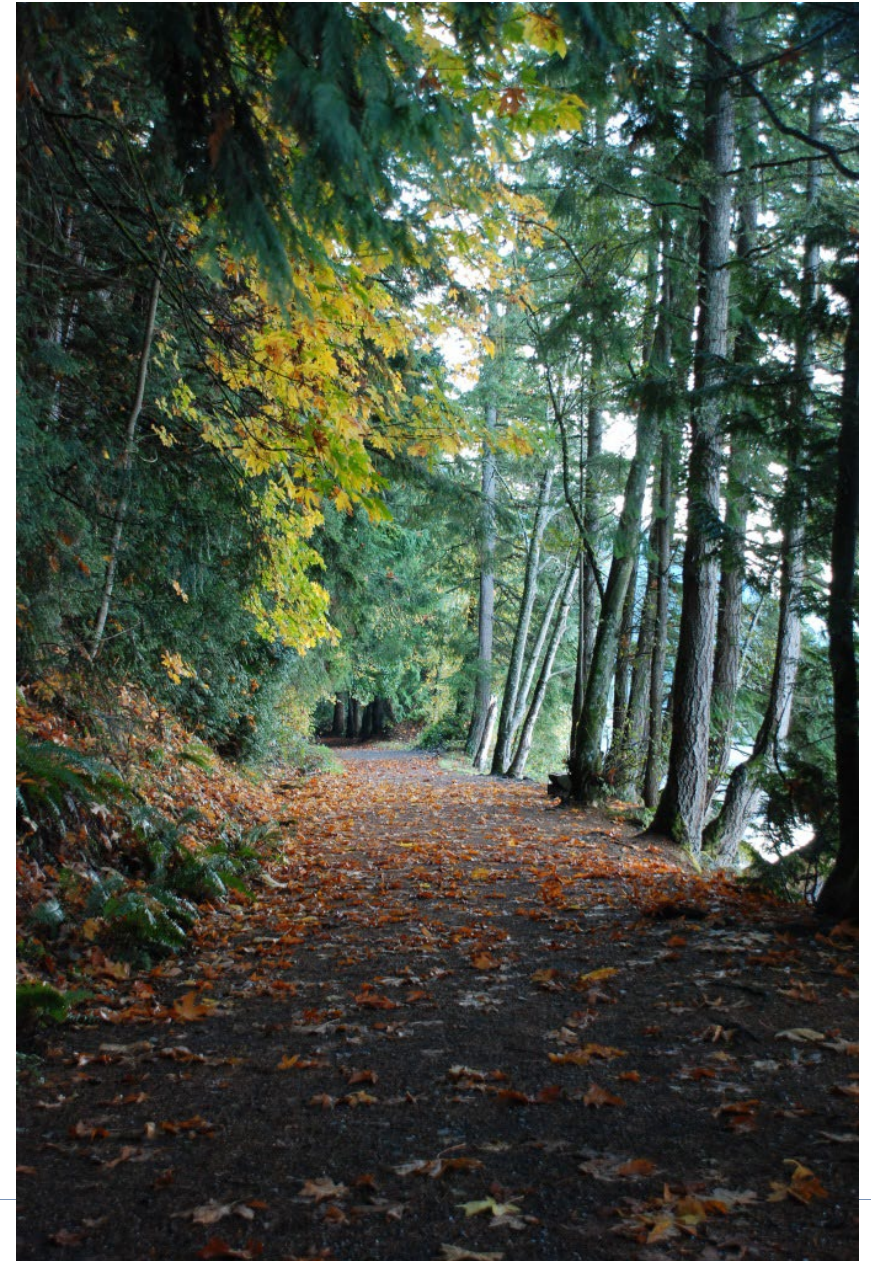
Recreation

Overview – Current Activities

Over 9,500 acres of recreation lands in Lake Whatcom watershed

15 miles of low-impact trails managed

Park hosts and ambassadors educate visitors



Program Area 7

Aquatic Invasive Species

Overview – Current Activities

Inspect watercraft (motorized and non-motorized) at launches and on private properties across the watershed to prevent spread or introduction of invasive species

- ~95,000 inspections since 2013
- ~15,000 AIS Awareness Course participants since 2014
- \$150,000+ Annual Permit Fees collected

Decontamination of high-risk watercraft

Monitoring for potential introductions + Response



WhatcomBoatInspections.com



Program Area 8

Utilities and Transportation

Overview – Current Activities

Manage water, sewer, and transportation systems to conserve water & prevent impacts

City of Bellingham: water, sewer, storm, streets, alleys, bike lanes, communications, street lighting, traffic controls

Whatcom County: LW Stormwater Utility, On-Site Septic systems, county roads

Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District: water and sewer conveyance

Sudden Valley infrastructure O+M Program



Program Area 9

Education and Engagement

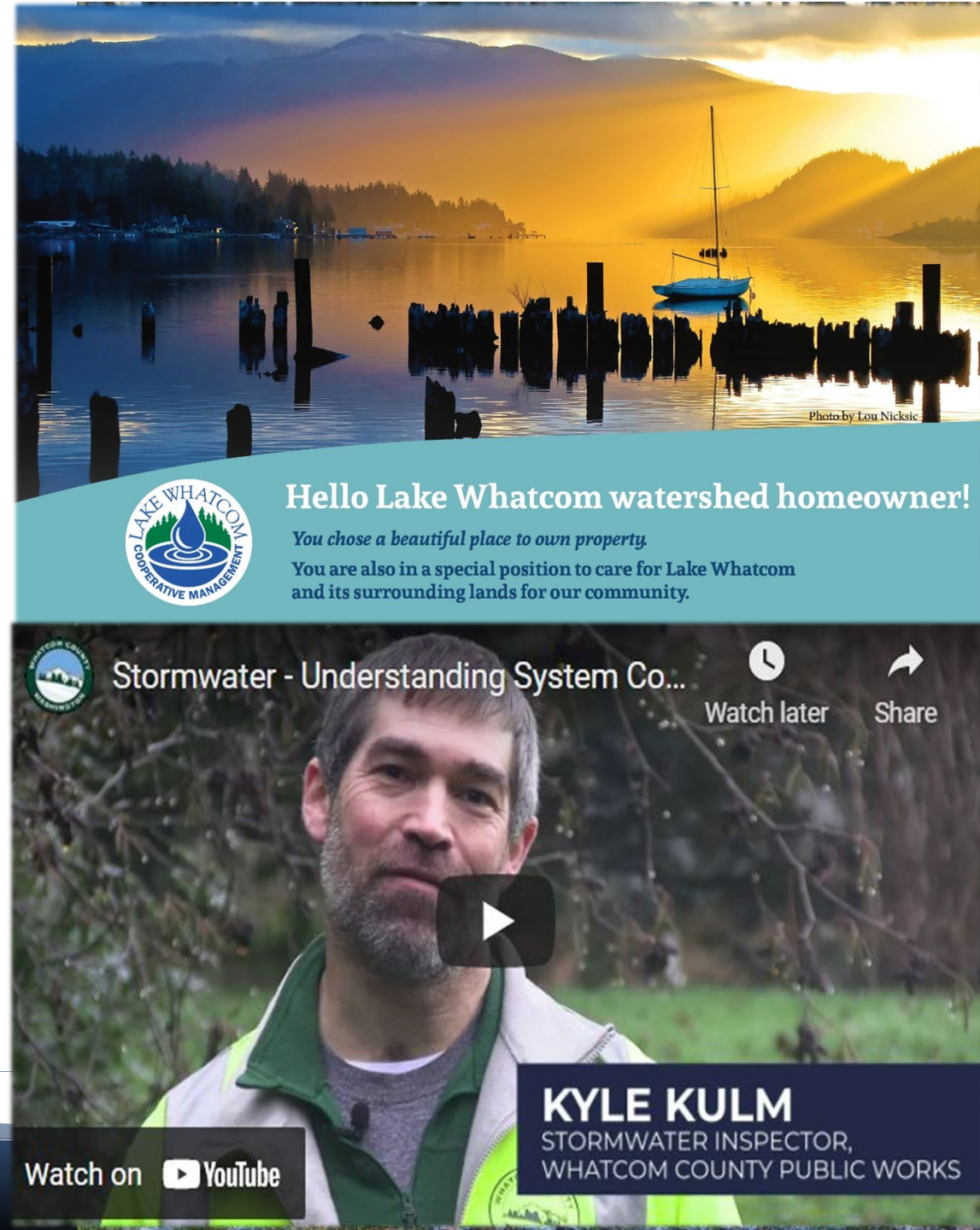
Overview – Current Activities

Raise awareness about Lake Whatcom and its watershed and promote stewardship

Support community engagement in LWMP program areas

Distribute *Stewards of the Lake* Guidebook and New Homeowner Packet and *Lake Whatcom Lowdown* Newsletter

Conduct Baseline Survey every 5 years to measure impacts of outreach programs



Program Area 10 Administration

Overview – Current Activities

Coordinate efforts and budget among three jurisdictions

Organize and publish annual reports

Ensure that programs meet regulatory requirements





Climate Action in the Lake Whatcom Watershed



Lake Management and Climate Change

Drier summers

More intense fall, winter, and spring rains

Warmer water for bacteria and AIS

Changes in forest and aquatic ecosystems

Proposed NEW Program Activities

Actions and Metrics

- For 2025-2029 Lake Whatcom Work Plan

Guiding Documents/Philosophies

- City and County Climate Action Plans

City-and-County-Wide Companion Efforts

- Education and Engagement / Administration / Budgeting

Climate Action in the Lake Whatcom Watershed



Climate Actions in Current Work Plan

Land Preservation:

- Choosing adaptable forest species for replanting
- Preparing for and responding to wildfire threat

Land Use:

- Preserving native vegetation

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention:

- Participating in regional planning to prepare for the next invaders and protect ecosystem resiliency

Utilities and Transportation:

- Promoting water conservation to address droughts and increasing population



Climate Action in the Lake Whatcom Watershed



Climate Actions in Next Work Plan

Monitoring and Data:

- Lake Whatcom Climate Vulnerability Assessment

Stormwater:

- Collecting new rainfall data for design instead of old models.

Recreation:

- Minimizing impacts from increased pressures for forests and shorelines during heat waves

Utilities and Transportation:

- Promoting public transportation and zero-carbon access to watershed lands



2025-2029 Work Plan Proposed Activities

Continued Progress

Continue watershed management activities across the existing 10 program areas

New, Improved, or Enhanced Actions

Add Climate Action activities and metrics (All)

Whatcom County Forest Management Plan (Land Preservation, Land Use, Recreation)

Phosphorus and Bacteria Optimized O+M (PBOOM) Assessment (Stormwater)

TMDL Assistance Mini-Grant Program (Stormwater)

TMDL Data Gaps Research (Stormwater, Monitoring and Data)

Lake Whatcom Climate Vulnerability Assessment (Monitoring and Data, Climate Action)

Lake Whatcom Rapid Response Plan (AIS)

Other actions as introduced through planning process (now – September) (All)



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County Council = Gary Stoyka

City Council = Renee LaCroix

LWWSD Commissioners = Justin Clary

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