

# Whatcom County Candidates

Editor's Note: Ten races for the Port of Bellingham Commission, Whatcom County Council and Bellingham City Council will appear on the general election ballot. Three County Council races will appear on the primary ballot.

Candidate responses were not edited by *Whatcom Watch*.

## Background:

Lake Whatcom is the drinking water source for Bellingham and surrounding areas, such as Sudden Valley. Many activities – from logging and development, to pesticides and invasive mussels hitching rides on uninspected boats – threaten the quality of our drinking water source. By the year 2066, the city and county are required to prevent 3,150 pounds of phosphorus from entering Lake Whatcom annually from the surrounding landscape, as mandated by the EPA.

The way in which the city and county must do that is to have over 80 percent of the watershed mimic a natural forested condition. The majority of the land base, as well as much of the remaining developable areas in the watershed, is in Whatcom County's jurisdiction. Whatcom County will be exploring an update to their development regulations in the watershed (known as the Lake Whatcom Overlay District) that includes preserving mature trees and discouraging large lawns for new residential developments. The purpose is to standardize its development codes with the city of Bellingham's and require elements of the existing Homeowner Incentive Program to apply to new developments.

## Question:

Do you support regulations in the Whatcom Overlay District to limit the size of lawns for all new developments, cap limits on the number of native trees that can be removed from a property (up to 35 percent or 5,000 square feet, whichever is lesser), and require the replacement of native trees when removing 50-plus-year-old trees? Please answer yes or no and explain.

## Whatcom County Council — District 1



**Kaylee Galloway**

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Lake Whatcom Overlay District currently has tree canopy regulations including replacement and retention rules. I am eager to explore how we can continue to expand and strengthen these regulations to preserve trees and require replacement of native trees as often as possible. I also support exploring opportunities to limit non-native species, such as lawns, in all new development.

Clean water and clean air are critical to the health of the environment and the well-being of our community. Thoughtful action to protect and restore the watershed is imperative. Stressors on our watershed will increase over time as climate change and community growth continues. It's important to take this seriously, implement a shared strategy, and take action.

The Whatcom County Council must take bold action to protect the watershed, and ensure all policy decisions made are equitable, driven by data and science, and retain appropriate flexibility to adapt to changes in circumstance. Currently, development regulations require preservation of forest to slow down phosphorus runoff into Lake Whatcom. To meet water quality standards, we need to implement meaningful policy restrictions and make significant investments now.



**Jeremiah Ramsey**

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Clean drinking water is obviously important for any community, and the Lake Whatcom Watershed is no exception. We all care about making sure that the valuable community gem and resource we have in Lake Whatcom is kept environmentally healthy and that future generations will also be able to enjoy our county's namesake as a source of drinking water and recreation.

During a recent trip to Germany in May, I got to see the positive result of an oxygen pumping project to address the phosphorus problem at Lake Fühlinger in Cologne – nature and culture in harmony, where families and friends get to swim and stand board among various kinds of birds and flowering plants. While this is not necessarily a solution in our discussion, it is an example of a creative way to improve the environment.

As with virtually all issues, it is important to keep an open mind and take various factors into consideration. I fully support following the science and keeping options on the table to maintain a high quality of drinking water and enhancing the quality of life in the watershed.



**Eddy Ury**

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Yes. The cumulative impacts of development in the watershed --particularly run-off pollution -- are costing all of us. It is imperative to protect and restore our shared drinking water reservoir.

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