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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS PARTNER ON POLLUTION SOLUTIONS

(Anacortes, WA, May 21, 2019) – A collaboration between the City of Anacortes, Samish Indian Nation, Anacortes High School Green Club and local homeowners continues to create new rain gardens in our community. Rain gardens are designed to use water-loving plants, suitable soils and landscaping to treat stormwater in our neighborhoods.

“Rain gardens mimic the function of the natural landscape. We basically use nature’s own engineering to provide attractive, low-maintenance oases for native plants and wildlife,” said Sarah Wheatley, Natural Resource Technician for the Samish Indian Nation. “The benefits extend from backyard birds and bees, all the way down the watershed to the salmon and shellfish – and then back again up the food chain to us and the orcas.”

The Samish Tribe and the AHS Green Club have assisted with the installation of several rain gardens in Anacortes. The most recent addition, two weeks ago, is in front of the home of City Councilmember Ryan Walters, who has been an advocate for rain gardens as a tool for stormwater management throughout the City.

The City of Anacortes provided excavation within the City right-of-way, Councilmember Walters provided the soil, water, and plants, the Samish Indian Nation Department of Natural Resources provided logistical and design support, and the Anacortes High School Green Club provided volunteer labor for the installation of the rain garden.

The forests and marshes that once covered Fidalgo Island held water in place long enough for nutrients and sediment to settle out into the soil rather than being flushed into the sea; in the soil, bacteria and fungi break down contaminants. Today contaminants such as brake dust, oil drips, fertilizer runoff, dog waste, and many other pollutants associated with daily life are washed straight into the Salish Sea. Rain gardens provide an opportunity for nature to help clean up stormwater prior to its discharge into our waterways through a low-cost, aesthetically pleasing landscape feature.

“The City of Anacortes intends to be a leader in managing stormwater,” Mayor Laurie Gere said. “As a city on an island, we have a special responsibility to ensure that pollutants from human activities aren’t allowed to reach the Salish Sea.”

The City is working on creating a program to inspire and facilitate homeowner-installed

raingardens in existing development throughout the city. “This project was a great opportunity to engage the community and refine the process for our upcoming rain garden program,” said Diane Hennebert, Stormwater Program Manager for the City of Anacortes. “We have some new insights that will be helpful as we move forward bringing this program to the community and encouraging homeowners throughout the City to manage their stormwater.”

Samish Indian Nation Department of Natural Resources:
<https://www.samishtribe.nsn.us/departments/environment>

City of Anacortes Stormwater Webpage: <https://www.anacorteswa.gov/493/Stormwater>

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