

Water Pollution Solutions

Whether we live next to a stream, shoreline, or miles from either, our everyday actions affect water quality.

We all live in a watershed, an area of land that drains to a common waterway such as a stream, lake, estuary, wetland, or even the ocean. Some people call it a drainage basin. Whatever you call it, it can be directly affected by our individual actions.

So how do we affect the watershed?

We build houses, driveways, yards, businesses, parking lots, roads, etc., creating hard impermeable surfaces. These hard surfaces keep water from soaking into the ground. This increases runoff, bypassing the natural filtering of native soil and vegetation. The amount and speed of the runoff rushing through ditches and pipes to streams can cause flooding, erosion, and destroy habitat.

Hard surfaces also provide an easy route to our waterways. Runoff picks up and mixes with whatever is on the ground and carries pollutants to our waters. Pollutants can come from various sources such as washing vehicles, equipment and boats, failing septic systems, garden and lawn practices, animal and pet waste, debris and waste washed or dumped into storm drains, etc.

In addition, remember to maintain your vehicles properly. Fix oil, antifreeze, and other types of leaks promptly. Take your vehicle to an oil changing shop instead of doing it yourself. If you do maintain your vehicle yourself, make sure the used oil and other fluids are disposed of properly, and clean up spills afterwards. Never dump oil, or anything else down a storm drain, and do not hose down areas afterwards.

Refer to the next page for suggestions on how to minimize your impact on our streams, lakes, and other waterways. If you have questions regarding water pollution, please contact the WSU Environmental Health and Safety Department at 509-335-3041.

And remember “Only Rain Down the Drain!”

Most of the information provided here is courtesy of the Kitsap County Surface and Stormwater Management Program.



