

# Local Waters

The Skagit & Samish Rivers, Sedro-Woolley Ditches, Brickyard & other local creeks are **impaired** by:

- ◆ A lack of oxygen from groundwater and excess nutrients; and/or
- ◆ Fecal coliform, a bacteria in warm-blooded animal waste; and/or
- ◆ High temperature from more pavement and roof tops and fewer trees



## Did you know ?

Urban trees cool, cleanse and reduce stormwater runoff.

An illicit discharge is anything that enters a storm drainage system that is not made up entirely of clean stormwater.

Runoff from our cities, neighborhoods and farms is the leading cause of water pollution.

Is stormwater treated by our cities?

*No.* Only sanitary sewer water (from toilets, showers, sinks, etc.) is treated. Stormwater is not treated. It just flows to the closest waterway or low area.

Did you know that just one inch of rain in the Sedro-Woolley area can generate millions of gallons of stormwater? Collecting and treating this runoff is just not feasible.



Remember: only rain down the drain.

StormWater Pollution Hotline  
(360) 855-0771

For more information, visit  
[www.ci.sedro-woolley.wa.us](http://www.ci.sedro-woolley.wa.us)  
or contact your Public Works Department:

City of Sedro-Woolley...(360) 855-0771

Skagit County...(360) 336-9400



Portions of this publication are courtesy of EPA and The City of Longview.

# The Solution to Stormwater Pollution

A citizen's guide  
to clean runoff



We all live  
downstream.

# Healthy habits for clean water



## Vehicles and Garage

- ◆ Use a **commercial carwash** or wash your car over grass to minimize dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain.
- ◆ Keep your car, boat, motorcycle, and other machinery well maintained.
- ◆ Clean **drips and spills** with absorbent pads, kitty litter, or sand. Dispose of it in the garbage before the next rain.
- ◆ Recycle those fluids. It is illegal to dump oils and chemicals to the ground or stormwater.



## Home

- ◆ **Non-toxic, biodegradable** products are preferred, but like any chemical, must not be discharged to stormwater.
- ◆ Inspect and pump **septic systems** regularly, protect drain fields from cars and tree roots, and flush responsibly. Failed septic systems release human waste.
- ◆ **Sweep up** and properly dispose of construction debris. Clean up spills **immediately**, and dispose of it safely.
- ◆ Clean **paint brushes** in a sink, without thinners. Filter and reuse paint thinners.



- ◆ Bring excess paints, thinners, and hazardous products to the **County Transfer Station, 14104 Ovenell Rd, Mt. Vernon, 10a.m.-4p.m., Mon.-Fri. & the 1st Sat. of each month.**
- \*Pour **carpet cleaning** wastewater in the sanitary sewer(inside)-not a storm sewer(outside).
- \*Send downspouts to lawn/garden during roof moss treatment.

## Quick Facts:

- ◆ Rain becomes stormwater runoff when it hits land. It washes our debris, chemicals, dirt, pet waste, auto grime, etc. to our lake, sloughs, rivers, and wetlands.
- ◆ 47% of US waters surveyed are unfit for uses like swimming, fishing, or drinking.\*
- ◆ Stormwater is *the leading cause* of water pollution, not industrial dumping.
- ◆ Stormwater gets zero or limited treatment.
- ◆ The solution is for each of us to reduce pollution at its many sources.



## Lawn, Garden and Pets

- ◆ Use pesticides and fertilizers **sparingly**. When use is necessary, apply the recommended amounts. Avoid application before rain.
- ◆ Select **native** plants and grasses. They typically require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides.
- ◆ **Sweep up** yard debris. Hosing away grass and leaf waste clogs storm drains and adds harmful nutrients and tannins to our local waters.
- ◆ **Don't pile yard debris on/near ditches.** This invites rodents and causes erosion.
- ◆ Compost yard waste.
- ◆ Mow at highest setting, mulch if possible.
- ◆ Water during the **cool** times of the day, and don't let water run to pavement or drains. Water deep and less often.
- ◆ Cover piles of dirt to prevent loss to wind and rain. **Vegetate** bare spots.
- ◆ When walking your pet, **pick up** the waste and dispose of it in a trash can or toilet. Otherwise, harmful bacteria and excess nutrients foul our waterways.



## Low Impact Development

- Hard surfaces generate much more runoff and cannot filter water. To better mimic natural areas, **plant trees** and . . .
- ◆ Direct downspouts and driveway runoff to a French drain.
  - ◆ Blend compost into soils to help them absorb runoff.
  - ◆ Plan landscaping projects to minimize paved areas or consider flagstones, pavers, or pervious concrete or asphalt.
  - ◆ Retain natural buffers around waterways or ditches.