## **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.



Storm drains are connected to streams and Locate your septic system and reserve drainfield. Protect septic tank, drainfield and reserve area from driving, parking, burning, or beaches. Keep them clean. standing or flowing water. Find out how much wastewater the system can handle daily and avoid overloading it. Always use liquid, Compost to help soils absorb runoff; non-phosphate detergents. Never put chemicals, food, grease, oil, antibiotics, plastic, cigarettes, diapers, or feminine products down prevent compaction; and to keep yard household drains. Remember, wet areas or odors mean trouble. Call Environmental Health and Safety at (509)335-3041. waste out of ditches and waterways where Preserve natural streambeds and drainages. it becomes unwanted fertilizer. Keep Get permits to fill or dredge. compost under cover away from beaches, wetlands, and streams. Check septic tank every 3 years. Pump when needed. Store covered farm manure away from water sources. Use a broom, not a hose, to Double bag and put pet clean driveways/walkways. waste in the trash. Fix car leaks. Perform boat maintenance away from water. Do not rinse Pull weeds instead of using spills. Clean up spilled chemicals. Use organic pest fluids with kitty litter controls like soap washes or or sand and dispose in predators. Use small amounts of organic low phosphorus Wash your car/boat at a fertilizers and carefully car wash. If washing at follow directions. home, use phosphatefree liquid soap, little water and wash on lawn away from drainfield. Plant native plants. They don't need chemicals, fertilizers, or watering and provide habitat for insects and birds that eat pests. Native plants also slow Dispose of household and filter stormwater. hazardous waste properly (paints, solvents, chemicals, etc.). Call Whitman County Solid Waste Recycling Division at Seed and mulch bare soil before the rainy season. (509) 397-4622. Keep storm drains, infiltration systems, and gutters clean. Dispose of boat waste at a Plant a native vegetative buffer to filter pollutants. Direct stormwater away from homes and into planted areas.\* certified marine dump station. Use porous pavement for discourage waterfowl, reduce shoreline and driveways/walkways. \*CAUTION: If you live on a shoreline bluff, seek professional advice streambank erosion, and provide shade, insects for regarding drainage methods. Saturation of soils can lead to landslides and slope failures.

young fish, and habitat.