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Online Educational Materials to Assist Rural Landowners

Rural stormwater solutions help prevent property damage, protect water quality

WSU Extension and the Washington Stormwater Center have developed a suite of online educational materials to help landowners in rural areas manage stormwater issues and reduce polluted runoff.

All the materials are available on the newly launched website: ruralstormwater.wsu.edu. Resources include videos, fact sheets, a white paper, demonstration sites, a glossary of terms, and in-depth information on stormwater in rural areas, understanding site conditions, creating a site drainage map, and options for management drainage.

The website provides a one-stop information clearinghouse for rural stormwater managers, property owners, and people interested in sustainable and beneficial ways to handle rainwater on their properties. All the materials are designed to help solve common rural problems such as standing water, minor flooding, and poor drainage.

According to Bob Simmons, WSU Extension, Associate Professor and Olympic Region Water Resources Specialist, most stormwater management efforts have focused on urban watersheds because of high densities of people, pollutant sources, and impervious surfaces. However, rural stormwater runoff can equally be harmful to property, structures, and roadways, in addition to degrading water quality. Simmons said, “The goal of the project is to improve water quality in rural areas, particularly around the Salish Sea in Western Washington, where there are many high-quality natural resources. Up until now, these areas have been underserved when it comes available stormwater management information.”

The foundation of the educational materials is a white paper authored by Dr. Ani Jayakaran (WSU Extension, Professor, Stormwater Specialist), titled: *Rural Property Surface Water Management; Surface Dispersion Infiltration Trenches and Bioinfiltration Swales*. Dr. Jayakaran and his team created a comprehensive reference, featuring graphic illustrations and citations throughout the paper. Fact sheets, videos and webpages based on the white paper were developed to make the technical information more accessibly.

The project also documents the construction of a rain garden at the Dungeness River Nature Center in Sequim, a gravel infiltration trench at the Kitsap Conservation District office in Poulsbo, and a bioinfiltration swale at Peninsula College in Port Angeles – all with on-site interpretive signage.

The peer-reviewed materials and website were developed over a two-year period with funding from the Environmental Protection Agency through the Puget Sound National Estuary program and the Stormwater Strategic Initiative.

For more information contact Bob Simmons at simmons@wsu.edu or visit ruralstormwater.wsu.edu.

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