

2007 calendar of events



A Stream Team volunteer applies a new storm drain marker.

March 17

Woodland Creek Planting Project
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Call Chris Maun or Ann Marie Finan for directions: 357-2491

March 31

Stream Team Field Class: "Purple Pipe Dreams: Reclaimed Water Benefits for People and Fish"
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Call Tim Wilson to register: 438-2687

May 10

SSWAB Meeting (see below)

June 2 & 3

WasteMobile Event
The WasteMobile will travel to south Thurston County to collect hazardous household products such as paints, glues, thinners, adhesives and auto products. Details will be posted on www.co.thurston.wa.us/wwm.

June 14, Aug. 9 & Oct. 11

SSWAB Meetings (see below)

March 8

SSWAB Meeting (see below)

March 10

Deschutes River Revegetation Project
10 a.m. to noon
Meet at Tumwater Golf Course Clubhouse
Call Debbie Smith to register: 754-4148

Meet SSWAB

The Storm and Surface Water Advisory Board reviews all issues affecting Thurston County's Storm and Surface Water Utility, and makes recommendations to county commissioners. Among other things, the board examines utility rates, construction projects, public-information efforts, staff work plans and stormwater policies. SSWAB is a citizen-based volunteer group appointed by county commissioners.

The public is welcome to attend SSWAB meetings, which are scheduled for the following days: March 8, May 10, June 14, Aug. 9 and Oct. 11. Meetings are held at 6 p.m. at the Roads and Transportation Building, located at 2404 Heritage Court off of Evergreen Park Drive S.W. in Olympia. The group meets in the "A/B" room, second floor. The dates and location occasionally change, so please call the Storm and Surface Water Program at 357-2491 before attending.

Storm and Surface Water Utility services

The Thurston County Storm and Surface Water Utility is a ratepayer-financed program of the Department of Water and Waste Management. The utility:

- Provides advice and on-site consultations for ratepayers who have drainage problems.
- Maintains county-built stormwater facilities.
- Monitors and inspects private stormwater facilities.
- Designs and constructs projects to reduce local stormwater flooding and protect water resources.
- Monitors local streams.
- Organizes volunteers to cleanup, monitor, and protect streams.
- Develops policies to manage stormwater runoff caused by new development. (Policies are subject to review by the public and approval by county commissioners.)
- Educates children and adults about water issues.
- Responds to flooding issues.



SPLASH Newsletter

Thurston County
Storm and Surface Water Utility
929 Lakeridge Drive S.W.
Olympia, Washington 98502

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Splash

Thurston County Storm and Surface Water Utility News

February 2007

Jump right in!

Welcome to SPLASH, the annual report of the Thurston County Storm and Surface Water Utility. Our goal is to keep ratepayers informed of the utility's work, and to share ways that we all, as individuals, can help reduce stormwater pollution, flooding and erosion.

In this edition, you'll learn ten easy steps to reduce pollution, and discover how construction projects are helping to protect Little McAllister Creek and Pattison Lake. The calendar section is full of opportunities to get involved. So jump right in, and discover how you can help protect our water resources!

Melting snow carries pollution

It's been a white winter this year and all that melting snow on streets and parking lots has carried a toxic stew of pollution into Thurston County water bodies.

Many people believe stormwater runoff – like wastewater from our homes – is transported to a treatment plant to be cleaned. Unfortunately, that's not the case. By the time stormwater runoff reaches its final destination, it has become laced with pollution. High volumes of runoff during winter storms can also erode stream banks, smothering salmon eggs under sediment.

Like rain, melting snow picks up pet waste, fertilizers and motor oil as it travels over hard surfaces and into storm drains. Eventually, the dirty runoff can end up in nearby rivers or streams, or in the soil where it can seep into ground water (our source of drinking water).

The good news is that each of us has the power to make a difference by changing small, individual activities that cause pollution. Read inside for 10 easy tips.



Melting snow can transport motor oil into nearby rivers and streams.

Fast facts

Gallons of runoff from a 1,200 square-foot roof, after one inch of rain: 748.
Gallons of runoff from a one-acre parking lot after one inch of rain: 27,000.

Square feet of impervious surface found on an average residential property in Thurston County: 3,600.

Source of facts 1 and 2: Washington Department of Ecology

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Tax statements include new septic system program

If you live in the Henderson Watershed Protection Area, you may have noticed the "Stormwater" portion of your property-tax statement is higher than last year. The reason: rates for a new septic system program in the Henderson Protection Area have been combined with the "Stormwater" rate as a single line on the tax statement.

Thurston County developed the new septic system program – with input from watershed residents – to reduce fecal bacteria levels in local creeks and Henderson Inlet.

The state Department of Health has closed or restricted shellfish harvesting on 480+ acres of land in Henderson Inlet, and required Thurston County to take action to reduce contamination.

For details, visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehrp/henderson.html or call 754-4111.

The new program began January 2007 and requires septic-system owners to obtain a renewable operational certificate from Thurston County. Routine inspections are required to renew the certificate, in most cases, every three years.

See how your stormwater rate is calculated by visiting the "Stormwater" link of www.co.thurston.wa.us/wwm.

Property Address	
Calculation of Taxes and Charges	
Land	
Buildings	
Personal Property	
Total Taxable Value	
Regular Tax Rate	
Voted Tax Rate	
Total Tax Rate	
Regular Taxes	
Voted Taxes	
Total Taxes	
State Forest Pres. Protection	
Conservation District	
Aviation/Weed	
Stormwater	
Total Other Charges	
Due April 30, 2007	
Due October 31, 2007	
Total Annual Due 2007	

The amount on this line may be higher for septic systems owners in the Henderson Watershed Protection Area.





Free neighborhood signs remind residents to pick up pet waste.

Free signs available

When dog waste is left on the street or lawn, it doesn't just go away or fertilize the grass. Instead, the bacteria can wash down storm drains and into ditches, streams, lakes, and inlets. Bacteria can travel for miles in the water and make it unsafe to swim or harvest shellfish.

Thurston County is offering free signs to remind people to pick up pet waste. The "Don't Let Your Pooch Pollute" signs come with an optional baggy dispenser for easy clean-ups. The county will supply the sign, stake, cement and first roll of plastic bags. However, neighborhoods must agree to install and maintain the signs.

To request a sign, contact Chris Maun at 357-2491 or e-mail maunc@co.thurston.wa.us.

Ten easy ways to reduce pollution

1. Recycle used motor oil.
2. Check vehicles regularly for leaks. Clean up spills with kitty litter or sand and dispose of the materials properly.
3. Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly, if at all.
4. Select native plants and trees, which generally require less water, fertilizer and pesticides. Also plant vegetation on bare spots to prevent erosion.
5. Rake storm drains and surrounding areas free of leaves and debris.
6. Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on the lawn.
7. Pick up pet waste and dispose of the waste properly.
8. Reduce rooftop runoff by directing downspouts to vegetated areas and not to the street.
9. At home, install permeable paving or patterns of cement and brick that allow water to infiltrate.
10. Have your septic system inspected at least every three years and pumped as necessary.



Rake that drain!

Storm drains, also called catch basins, are common throughout Thurston County. They include a grate or curb inlet where stormwater runoff enters a catch basin. But there is more here than meets the eye! Beneath the grate is a vault, or sump, which is designed to capture sediment, debris and other pollutants before stormwater is transported to your local stormwater pond or a nearby body of water.

Join Stream Team

Stream Team is a program for citizens who want to protect and enhance local streams, creeks, rivers and other water resources through education and action. Stream Team is sponsored by the storm and surface water utilities of Thurston County, Tumwater, Lacey and Olympia.

During heavy rains, leaves, tree needles and trash are quickly swept into storm drains, often clogging them and causing localized flooding. You can help! By keeping leaves and other debris out of streets and gutters you can prevent problems from occurring. If flooding occurs in your neighborhood during periods of heavy precipitation, grab that yard rake and safely rake that drain clear of clogging debris!

To learn more about Stream Team programs, such as field classes, storm drain marker installation and streamside revegetation projects, please contact Thurston County Stream Team Coordinator Chris Maun at 357-2491 or e-mail: maunc@co.thurston.wa.us.

Basin plans: fitting the pieces together for water

Managing water resources can be like trying to solve a Rubick's cube – changes made in one area can affect the outcome elsewhere.

A ditch built in one area might affect neighborhoods downstream. New roads can compact soil and interrupt the underground flow of water that is needed by rivers and streams. New housing developments might manage stormwater runoff from their property, but the trees cut during construction can leave less shade for streams and increase water temperatures for fish.

Of course, water doesn't recognize boundaries between governments, so the actions of one government might be countered downstream in another jurisdiction.

So what's the answer to the puzzle? "Basin planning" goes a long way toward a solution. Basin plans are thorough investigations into the drainage problems and potential solutions within a given watershed. The plans involve gathering data about the topography of the land, and the way water moves through the soil. The plans also assess how drainage projects and other activities might affect different areas.

Ecology issues stormwater rules

Stormwater runoff is the largest source of urban water pollution in Washington State and many other states across the nation. To tackle the problem, the federal Environmental Protection Agency has charged the state Department of Ecology with administering what is known as "NPDES Phase II." Simply put, "NPDES Phase II" requires cities and counties of a certain size to adopt stormwater-management programs to reduce the amount of pollution that enters water bodies.

On Jan. 17, the Department of Ecology released its final package of requirements for areas that fall under Phase II, which includes Thurston County. County officials are carefully reviewing the rules to determine their impact on our area. Among other things, Thurston County must ensure its stormwater programs:

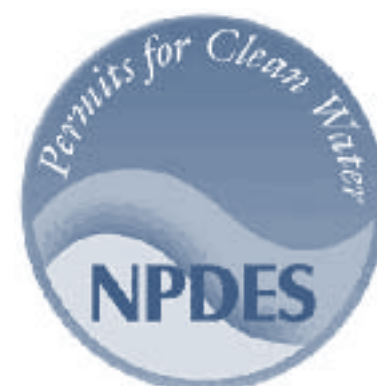
- ◆ Inform and involve the public in stormwater-related issues.
- ◆ Detect and eliminate illegal dumping in stormwater systems.
- ◆ Include procedures or ordinances that reduce stormwater pollution and runoff from construction sites and newly developed land.
- ◆ Reduce pollution from county-built projects and train county employees appropriately.
- ◆ Are monitored and documented.

Fortunately, the Thurston County Storm and Surface Water Utility is already on its way to meeting these requirements; in fact, many of the programs were in place before Phase II reached our area.

Basin plans are reviewed and approved by the elected officials of each participating agency involved. (Basin plans in Thurston County are usually written jointly by the county and cities.)

A basin plan itself does not provide funding or authorization for projects, however, Thurston County commissioners use the basin plans as a tool when deciding which stormwater construction projects to finance. To see the basin plans, visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/wwm.

So how, exactly, will the NPDES Phase II requirements affect Thurston County residents? At this point, it is too early to tell; however, Thurston County must review its construction-permitting process to make sure it meets the latest rules. Residents and businesses who illegally dump chemicals in storm drains may face a stiffer response from the county. For more information, visit www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/index.html.



Projects protect Little McAllister Creek, Pattison Lake

Every year, the county Storm and Surface Water Utility designs or builds projects to help reduce pollution, flooding and erosion caused by stormwater runoff. The most recent projects focus on protecting Little McAllister Creek and Pattison Lake.

In the case of Little McAllister Creek, staff worked with homeowners in The Meadows neighborhood near Lacey to

expand an existing stormwater pond and add two more ponds. The new system provides more holding space for stormwater runoff, and slows the volume of the water long enough for pollutants to settle out before the water is conveyed, at a more measured pace, into Little McAllister Creek.



The Mallard Pond project will help protect Little McAllister Creek.

Pattison Lake will be better protected under a new stormwater system designed for the vicinity of Lakemont and 49th Street near Lacey. Under the new system, stormwater will be conveyed into a new underground vault, where the water will spin and cast-away sediments before entering Pattison Lake. The county will break ground on this project in 2007.

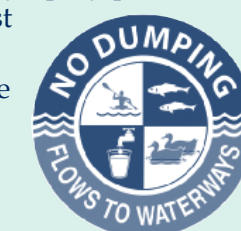
Both of these projects were made possible by the "capital facilities" portion of the stormwater utility rate. This portion of the rate generates \$500,000 a year, enough to fund one new project each year.

Below is a list of stormwater projects slated for 2007 and beyond. (These projects are subject to change.)

Location	Addresses flooding	Protects water quality	Protects wildlife habitat	Status
Mallard Pond SE	X	X	X	2007
Lakemont and 49th SE	X	X		2007
Mouth of Little McAllister SE	X		X	2009
Clearfield Court SE	X	X		2007/2008
Limerick Detention Pond SE	X	X		2008/2009
Evergreen Terrace SE	X	X		2007/2008
Ferndale Detention Pond SE	X	X		2009/2010
Kaiser Road N.W.	X			2010
Wesley Loop N.W.	X	X	X	2007
Love Joy Court NE	X	X		2008/2009
Donnelly Drive	X	X		2007/2008
McLane Creek Basin Plan (Totten/Eld)	X	X	X	2008/2009

New look for drain markers

For many years, Stream Team volunteers have spray painted stencils to mark storm drains with an important message: "Dump No Waste: Drains to Streams." This message is a reminder that old paint, motor oil and soap should never be dumped down storm drains. Unfortunately, spray painted markings last only a year or two before they wear away.



Beginning this summer, Thurston County Stream Team will switch to Duracast Curb Markers. These are manufactured plastic signs that are glued to curbs with a super strong adhesive. They are very durable and long-lasting. Easily installed and highly visible, these markers will remind us for many years to "dump no waste," and also enable people to easily locate clogged drains during periods of flooding.

If you want to help protect your local stream and ground water, installing storm drain markers is a fun project for your family or community group. Please call Chris Maun at 357-2491 or e-mail maunc@co.thurston.wa.us.