



#1 Toxic threat to the Puget Sound

Stormwater Runoff

What you need to know & what you can do.



It all starts with rain.
(and around here, it rains - a lot.)

In the Puget Sound, each year brings about **140 rainy days**

Every year, a single paved acre in Seattle produces approximately **1 million gallons of runoff**

Standard Ominous Cloud Cover in Pacific Northwest.

Development in urban areas can cover over 50% of land with impervious surfaces.

That then heads down the drain.
(by flowing over impermeable pavements)

City to Sound Underground Highway

that includes chemical cleaners, dog poop, oil, toxic chemicals, fertilizers, sediments and heavy metals

...And into our Sound
(where it then wreaks havoc on our marine ecosystem and surrounding communities)

Largely unrestrained, stormwater quickly makes its way into our water. Most stormwater goes untreated, pouring directly into the Sound and other water bodies.

Puget Sound critters (not to scale—Orcas are huge! Starfish? Not so much.)

Which matters because ...

Our Puget Sound critters are severely affected by this toxic mix of stormwater contaminants. In fact, salmon exposed to water gathered from a Seattle highway have been shown to die within 12 hours.

To make matters worse, certain chemicals, such as PCBs, do not readily biodegrade. These and other toxins bio-accumulate up the food chain, affecting everything from orca whales and other predators to humans. Consequently, polluted waters threaten the health of many Washington residents, in particular local fishermen and those who eat local seafood.

Well that's depressing ... What can we do?

Quite a lot actually. From individual actions to state level policy, there's a lot of work to be done.

- Post..learn how to be a clean water leader below.
- Reduce Your Individual Impact**

Start small by stopping pollution at its source in your home. Got a leaky car? Fix that leak! Make sure to scoop the poop when walking Spot, curb artificial fertilizer and pesticide use and consider replacing hard surfaces or lawns with rain gardens that absorb and filter polluted runoff!
 - Speak up for Clean Water!**

Individual actions are important, but just as important is holding our leaders accountable for needed policy changes. Whether it's supporting stormwater funding, commenting or testifying on agency rules, or showing up to advocate for municipal code changes, your voice can make a difference.

Stormwater Success Story: Puget Soundkeeper's advocacy since 2007 has resulted in precedent-setting regulations for new green stormwater infrastructure (rain gardens, etc). These new regulations are just now taking effect and will reduce stormwater contaminants entering Puget Sound, but only if they are actually implemented on the ground. You can help by lending support for these rules as they are introduced locally!
 - Patrol Your Local Waters and Report Pollution Concerns**

Take charge of your neighborhood stream, beach or lake. Report discolored waters, oil sheens or other concerns to Puget Soundkeeper's Hotline: 1 (800)-42PUGET or the State oil spill Hotline: 1 (800)-OILS-911