

Where does the money I pay for storm water go?

The storm water fund pays for two major categories of effort within the City.

Maintenance: Approximately half of the funds are used to maintain the City owned storm water systems that provide drainage for the City streets. The City maintains 572 catch basins, over 9 miles of storm drainage pipes and culverts, 9 storm ponds and approximately 15 infiltration facilities. The City maintenance crew is typically busy during heavy rain events keeping the inlets and outlets of the storm system free of debris to prevent street and property damage. Other maintenance activities are ditch maintenance and catch basin cleaning.

Water Quality: This category of effort is focused on dealing with the impacts of urban living on the water environment. When we live in a dense urban environment, we truck in food, fuel, supplies, equipment and build all kind of things to sustain life in an urban environment. Our activities and habits of washing cars, applying chemicals and cleaners for every imaginable purpose, keeping dogs and cats, fertilizing lawns, piling lawn clippings near creeks or wetlands, leaky garbage cans, all contribute to the degradation of surface and ground water quality. Even driving our vehicle(s) on the streets also distributes heavy metals, hydrocarbons, and other contaminants along the streets that add pollutants to the creeks, wetlands and lakes in our area. The City is required under our storm water permit from the Department of Ecology to reduce these impacts by educating our citizens and directing them to better management practices, tightening the requirements for proper erosion and sediment control on construction sites, policing illegal discharges into the storm system or natural water systems, and improving the city maintenance activities in the interest of protecting storm water and providing for lower impact development standards for the future.

Examples of this type of effort would be:

- 1) Preparation of the storm water comprehensive plan which provides the professional guidance for the activities listed above.
- 2) Training our staff on Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination and erosion & sediment control
- 3) Water Quality testing on Lake Sawyer as required by the Department of Ecology
- 4) Storm Pond inspections and maintenance
- 5) Public education
- 6) Implementing the best management practices with all city operations
- 7) Requiring new development to provide facilities that provide storm water treatment with the best storm water treatment practices.

What can I do to help?

One of the first things you can do to help is take the time to educate yourself on the various activities and practices around your home that impact surface water and ground water. The following website is a great site to explore that will help raise your awareness and provide insight in how you reduce your impact to the local and regional water environment:

www.pugetsoundstartshere.org. We will continue to provide you with more information on how we can reduce our impact to the creeks, wetlands and lakes.