

## How are the projects paid for?

Basin plan development and projects are funded by stormwater fees collected from basin residents in unincorporated Pierce County. Surface Water Management uses fees in the same basin from which they are collected to improve surface water drainage and quality in the basin.

## How can I get involved?

A series of public meetings and open houses are conducted during the basin plan development process. Residents and property owners in the basin are invited, and the general public is welcome to attend.

Each year, Surface Water Management uses basin plans to develop its "6-Year Capital Facilities Plan" (CFP). Surface Water Management staff takes the CFP to local communities and watershed councils to review the status of basin plans and to get input on next year's projects. The CFP is also subject to Pierce County Planning Commission and County Council hearings before adoption.



Public input helps shape basin plans.

## In the works: Pierce County Basin Plans

### Plans issued in 2003

Clover Creek Basin Plan  
Gig Harbor Basin Plan  
Muck Creek Basin Plan

### Plans issued in 2005

Mid-Puyallup Basin Plan  
Clear/Clarks Creek Basin Plan  
Browns Point/Hylebos Basin Plan  
Key Peninsula/Islands Basin Plan

### Plan issued in 2008

Nisqually River Basin Plan

### Plans to be issued in 2009

Carbon River Basin Plan  
Lower White River/Lake Tapps Basin Plan

## For more information or to get involved

For more information about Pierce County basin planning, call 253-798-2725, or visit the Surface Water Management website at [www.piercecountywa.org/water](http://www.piercecountywa.org/water) and click on Watershed Services.

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Surface Water Management Division is to be a responsive service organization that efficiently addresses flood control, water quality, and the preservation of natural drainage systems.

# Basin Planning

## Managing Surface Water in Your Area



Pierce County  
Public Works and Utilities  
Surface Water Management



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## What is a basin?

Basins are discrete drainage areas contained within larger drainages in the landscape called watersheds. Basins and watersheds drain water into rivers, streams or other bodies of water. Watersheds can span large land areas, typically crossing political and community boundaries. There are 26 basins within Pierce County.

The Surface Water Management Division of Pierce County Public Works and Utilities has developed basin plans for 10 areas within unincorporated Pierce County. The plans identify and prioritize projects to improve flood management, water quality and riparian habitat.

## What is a basin plan?

A basin plan is a surface water management process consisting of three parts: a scientific study of the basin's drainage features and their quality (Phase 1); developing actions and recommendations for resolving any deficiencies discovered during the study (Phase 2), and implement-



Neighborhood flooding in Pierce County

ing the recommendations, followed by monitoring (Phase 3).

### **Phase 1: Study the drainage features**

Information about flooding, water quality and fisheries resources in the basin is collected in a Basin Characterization Report. Scientists develop detailed topographic models of the basin. Surface water flow patterns are created using soils, precipitation and land use information and computerized geographic information systems (GIS).



Lake Steilacoom Boulevard Fish Ladder

Field technicians walk stream segments and road passages to precisely locate obstructions and other problems that may cause flooding. They also take measurements and water samples to document floodplain habitat and water quality. Scientific models are used to evaluate habitat and stream characteristics.

### **Phase 2: Decide how to resolve issues**

In Phase 2 of the basin plan, engineers, biologists and planners use the Basin Characterization Report and other data to develop projects that reduce flood damage and improve water quality and floodplain

habitat. With input from basin residents, interdisciplinary teams then decide the best way to resolve any issues, and their importance compared to other known problems.

Using this process, a list is developed of proposed construction projects and non-structural actions in the basin. Projects that provide multiple benefits, such as flood management, water quality and habitat, are prioritized. The completed basin plan, including the proposed projects and actions (Phase 3), is submitted to the Pierce County Council for approval and adoption.



Swan Creek

### **Phase 3: Make basin improvements**

In Phase 3, work begins on the highest-priority construction projects and non-structural actions identified in Phase 2.

Meanwhile, environmental conditions at sites selected during Phase 1 are continually monitored, helping Surface Water Management assess the effectiveness of its actions.