



Let the Rain Soak In

Puget Sound and local waterways are in trouble, and people are the solution. The “Let the Rain Soak In” project introduces people to simple steps they can take to keep our local waterways clean.



**Protect our waterways,
Soak up the rain!**

www.piercecountywa.org/LID



Why let the rain soak in?

More people

Pierce County's population has doubled over the past 40 years, and is predicted to increase. As more people move in, new construction of buildings, driveways, and roads prevent rainwater from soaking into the ground.

Our climate is changing

Our region will get more rain and stronger storms. Rain that falls on our roofs, roads and driveways collects quickly, and then flows into ditches and pipes. This runoff can flood homes and erode hillsides and stream banks. It also carries pollution like dirt, oil, metals, fertilizers, pesticides, bacteria, and toxic chemicals to our salmon-spawning streams and shellfish beaches.

We're in this together

New construction and public roads follow new, stricter regulations, but older development is not required to meet new requirements. Residential properties make up 40% of Pierce County's urban land. What we do at home counts.

What can I do?

Let the rain soak in

If we can make a developed area work more like a native forest, we can slow the flow of runoff and prevent pollution. We can help our community work more like the forest by taking some simple steps around our homes and neighborhoods.



Plant trees and native plants. Native plants and trees work miracles. They soak up runoff, require less water, filter out pollutants, and help recharge groundwater. Consider native plants in your landscape.



Reduce paved area. Consider removing paved areas around your home. Replace your concrete patio with a deck or pavers. Driveways can be constructed of pavers or narrower with two paved tire tracks.



Build healthy soils. Improve your soil with compost and mulch to reduce your need for water, pesticides and fertilizers. Try slow-release fertilizer and natural lawn chemicals instead.



Reuse rain water. Attach rain barrels or a cistern to your house's downspouts to collect rainwater. Reuse the rain to water your lawn, garden or livestock.



Create a rain garden. Direct your runoff to a rain garden – a shallow depression in the ground landscaped with native plants used to soak up rainwater. Go to www.piercecountywa.org/raingarden to learn how.

Why let the rain soak in?

- Reduce flooding
- Protect property
- Recharge groundwater
- Restore our waters for people and wildlife



Making this . . .



. . . work like this

Keep it clean . . .

Besides slowing the flow of runoff, it is important to keep it clean to protect our rivers, streams, lakes and Puget Sound. As runoff flows over the ground, it picks up pollution that comes from our daily activities, like driving, yard care, building maintenance, and your dog. Here's how you can help:

Practice natural yard care. Use natural methods, like compost and mulching, to fertilize your yard and control pests. If you must use pesticides and fertilizers, try natural options first and always use and dispose of them according to the instructions on the label.

Clean up pet waste – bag it and throw it in the trash. There are more than 206,000 dogs in Pierce County who create more than 34 tons of waste per day. When pet waste is not picked up, it is carried to our waterways by runoff.

Take your car to a commercial car wash or wash it on the lawn. Commercial car washes re-use water and discharge wastewater to the sewer where it is treated. The ingredients in soap, even biodegradable soap, are extremely harmful to salmon.

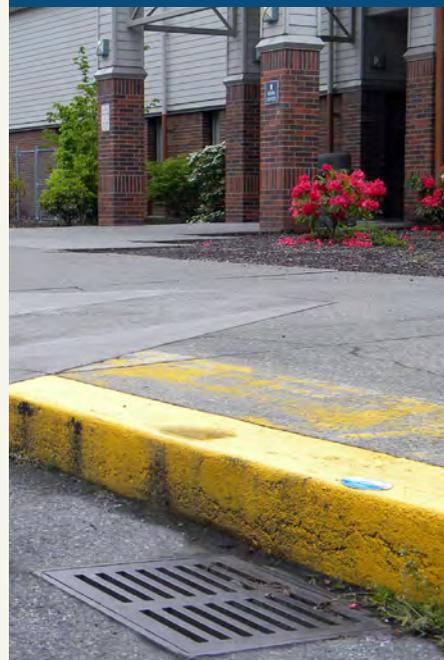
Dispose of hazardous chemicals properly. Don't ever dump chemicals down a storm drain, or into a ditch or stream. If you see someone else doing so, report it right away by calling (253)798-4274. Only rain down the drain!

Fix leaks in cars and equipment. A little oil can do a lot of damage if it gets into our waterways. If you can't fix a leak right away, soak it up with cardboard or kitty litter and throw it in the trash.

One little drip might not seem like a big deal, but with more than 4 million people living in our region, a little bit adds up to a big problem.

Whatever solution you choose to manage runoff on your property, be sure it is properly maintained:

- Check your system regularly to make sure water is flowing where you want it to be.
- Keep leaves and other debris out of storm drains to keep your neighborhood streets from flooding.



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Remember, don't improve your property at your neighbor's expense. If you have a drainage problem, check with your local jurisdiction for ways you might improve it. Check with your local planning department to determine whether a permit is required for any improvement.

What is government doing to help?

Pierce County or individual cities maintain the public drainage system in your area. Most properties pay a monthly or yearly service charge. These funds are used to reduce flooding, inspect, maintain and improve the drainage system, monitor and improve water quality, and provide public education programs.

Check out these cool local projects that are cleaning up stormwater runoff!

- Pervious pavement and rain gardens at Sprinker Recreation Center in Spanaway
- Residential rain gardens and green streets in Puyallup
- Green roof, cisterns, and rain gardens at the Center for Urban Waters in Tacoma
- Rain garden and rain chains at Lakewood City Hall

Want to learn more?

See fact sheets for simple projects you can do around your home to let the rain soak in at: www.piercecountywa.org/LID or request a free paper copy from Pierce County Surface Water Management by calling (253)798-2725.

