



STORM SYSTEM

Snohomish is full of waterways and the city is both proud and dedicated to helping protect them. The city is flanked by the Snohomish River to the South, the Pilchuck River to the east and Cemetery Creek to the west. Blackman's Lake sits squarely in the middle and boasts a long history of community interest. The city is classified as a phase II municipality and manages its own national pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) permit.

WHERE DOES POLLUTION COME FROM?

More than 60% of water pollution comes from things like:

- cars leaking oil,
- fertilizers and pesticides from farms and gardens,
- failing septic tanks,
- pet waste, and
- fuel spills from recreational boating.

All these small, dispersed sources add up to a big pollution problem. Pay attention to what the water brings into the gutter and where there's an oily sheen on a puddle. Notice how runoff seems to be everywhere in the city and is harder to find in the forest. In forests and grasslands, trees and other plants will take up some of this water. Water will also collect on their leaves and needles and evaporate. Wetlands absorb and hold runoff. In a natural or near natural setting, the water that does run off directly into streams or other waters is usually filtered and slowed by the web of plants it runs through, a sort of natural purifying system.

WHAT IS STORMWATER

Stormwater refers to water, such as rain or snow, that falls to the surface of roads, yards, roofs etc.. When it reaches the surface, stormwater becomes polluted as it collects various pollutants (oil, grease, chemicals, sediment, nutrients, pathogens) from its travels along streets, drains, open channels.

HOW IS STORMWATER MANAGED?

Stormwater permits are issued under federal and state laws to control surface waters (rivers, lakes and streams) and groundwater (aquifers and wells) from polluted runoff. The City is required to have a stormwater management plan that addresses stormwater quality and volume. This plan is required to comply with the Eastern Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater permit.

As part of the permit and management plan, the city is required to inspect, clean and maintain all 1,832 catch basins and 36.5 miles of storm pipe.

IS STORMWATER TREATED?

Most stormwater is not treated. Even when it goes into a storm drain, it will eventually be discharged directly into a local water way such as the Snohomish or Pilchuck River. However, in combined sewer systems, stormwater flows with wastewater and is treated at a Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Combined System: Includes both sanitary sewer and stormwater, which serves much of the downtown area; some of this system is over 100 years old. There is about 46,500 feet of CSS pipe, ranging between 6" and 30" in pipe diameter. The City is working on separating the CSS by installing new stormwater pipes throughout the area that will discharge to the Snohomish River instead of the WWTP.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO REDUCE STORMWATER POLLUTION?

While regulations and new technologies can help, we can't expect them to completely make up for the impacts of converting forests and grasslands into shopping malls or subdivisions.

- Reduce the amount of paved or hard surface areas. Consider permeable paving for that new patio or driveway.
- Wear and tear on roads, tires and brakes leaves a lot of pollutants behind. Fix vehicle fluid leaks immediately, and consider alternatives to driving solo.
- Get involved in community stormwater projects such as marking storm drains and maintaining neighborhood green spaces.

