

Dear Educator,

When it rains, where does the water go? With so many paved roads and buildings, water can't seep into the ground where it would naturally be filtered. Instead, the water flows to the nearest storm drain where it flows directly, unfiltered, to the Puget Sound or a local lake or river.

In some instances there is a direct source of pollution that enters our stormwater, such as a leaking diesel storage tank. This type of pollution is called point source pollution and can be found by tracing back through the stormwater system and finding the source and stopping it. BUT, the biggest source of pollutants that enter our stormwater system is from *us*. So how do we keep the stormwater clean and prevent pollution from entering our local bodies of water?

We must learn to practice healthy every day behaviors that limit stormwater contaminants like yard chemicals, oil, grease, soap and bacteria from pet waste from sweeping across our yards and streets when it rains and entering our stormwater system.

For further information please visit Puget Sound Starts Here at:

<http://www.pugetsoundstartshere.org/>

Then ask your students to answer the following questions. You may wish to print the following paragraph and puzzle for your students.

1. What is the one most threatening and widespread contaminate (source of pollution) of our Puget Sound?
2. How does animal waste contribute to the pollution of our water?
3. Name the ways that pesticides and fertilizers enter our storm system?
4. When thinking about preventing stormwater pollution, why is it important to keep our cars in good working condition?
5. Trash is not only an eyesore, it contributes to pollution in our storm system in what way?

Read through the following paragraph and complete the word search on the next page.

The **watershed** approach is the preferred way to restore a stream, river, or lake. It looks beyond the body of water itself and examines the entire drainage area, including all the potential sources of pollution that drain into it. Water **conservation** is practicing and using technologies that limit water use in the bathroom, kitchen, laundry room, lawn, driveway and garden. Conserving water reduces the demand of existing water supplies and limits the amount of water that runs off the land. **Runoff** should also be minimized by using **low impact** development (LID) techniques, which work with the natural landscape and native plants to soak up more rainwater by improving infiltration. Low impact development solutions include **rain gardens** and green roofs, which treat rainwater as a precious resource. Other ways to control polluted runoff include **erosion** control techniques such as silt fencing around construction sites, establishment of **riparian** (vegetated) zones next to bodies of water to filter out pollutants and **xeriscape** landscaping, which incorporates native plants that minimize maintenance needs. Finally, many local groups organize volunteer **monitoring** efforts, which provide information that can help government agencies understand the impacts of nonpoint source pollution and solve problems. Working together, we can all make a difference.

Can You Find These Words?

(Circle each one)

Nonpoint Source
Runoff
Watershed
Monitoring
Conservation
Environment
Water
Pollution
Low Impact

Rain Gardens
Nutrients
Sediment
Pesticide
Fertilizer
Xeriscape
Riparian
Erosion

