

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO AT HOME

What you can do at home to reduce stormwater runoff

1. Maintain your car or truck. Never dump anything down a storm drain. Always recycle used oil, antifreeze and other fluids. Fix oil leaks in your vehicles right away.
2. Wash your car at a commercial car wash rather than in the street or in your driveway. Soap and toxic gunk need to be properly collected and treated.
3. Drive less. Leave your car at home at least one day each week and take a bus, carpool or bike to work. Combine errands when you drive. Get vehicle emissions checked and repaired. Buy a low emission vehicle. Less vehicles on the road means less emissions and runoff.
4. Cut down on fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. If you use these chemicals, follow directions and use them sparingly. Don't fertilize before a rainstorm. Consider using organic fertilizers. Let your lawn go golden brown in the summer months; it will rebound in the fall. Compost or mulch lawn clippings. Preserve existing trees or plant new ones. Trees hold rainfall and help manage stormwater.
5. Remove part or all of your lawn. Lawns require a lot of watering, mowing and caring. Replace part of your lawn with native, drought-resistant plants. Add compost to planting soil and dress it with mulch to improve plant growth and reduce stormwater runoff.
6. If you are on a septic system, maintain the system. Septic systems require regular inspections, maintenance and pumping, or they will fail, cost a lot of money to fix and could pollute nearby lakes and streams. Have a professional inspector check your system regularly and have it pumped out when needed.
7. Pick up after your pets and keep animals out of streams. Scoop your dog's poop and properly dispose of it. Also, make sure fences and other structures are keeping cows, horses and other animals out of streams. Compost manure in a designated area so that it doesn't wash off into nearby waterways.
8. Reduce impervious surfaces and increase the vegetated land cover of your property. Impervious surfaces include your roof, driveway, patios and lawn. Reduce rooftop runoff by directing your downspouts to vegetated areas, and not to the storm drain on your street. For your driveway and patios, consider putting in permeable paving or patterns of cement and brick that allow water to filter through it.
9. Support your local storm or surface water program. Programs to maintain a community's stormwater system, prevent flooding and protect natural resources may cost money in the short run but save money for damages to public and private property in the long term. Take advantage of opportunities to educate yourself and your family about your local watershed. Consider volunteering for stream restoration or other local volunteer projects.
10. Make smart growth choices. Choose to live in a neighborhood that provides you with all conveniences: low maintenance homes and lawns, nearby shopping, walking paths, easy-access to buses and trains, and green, open spaces to enjoy.

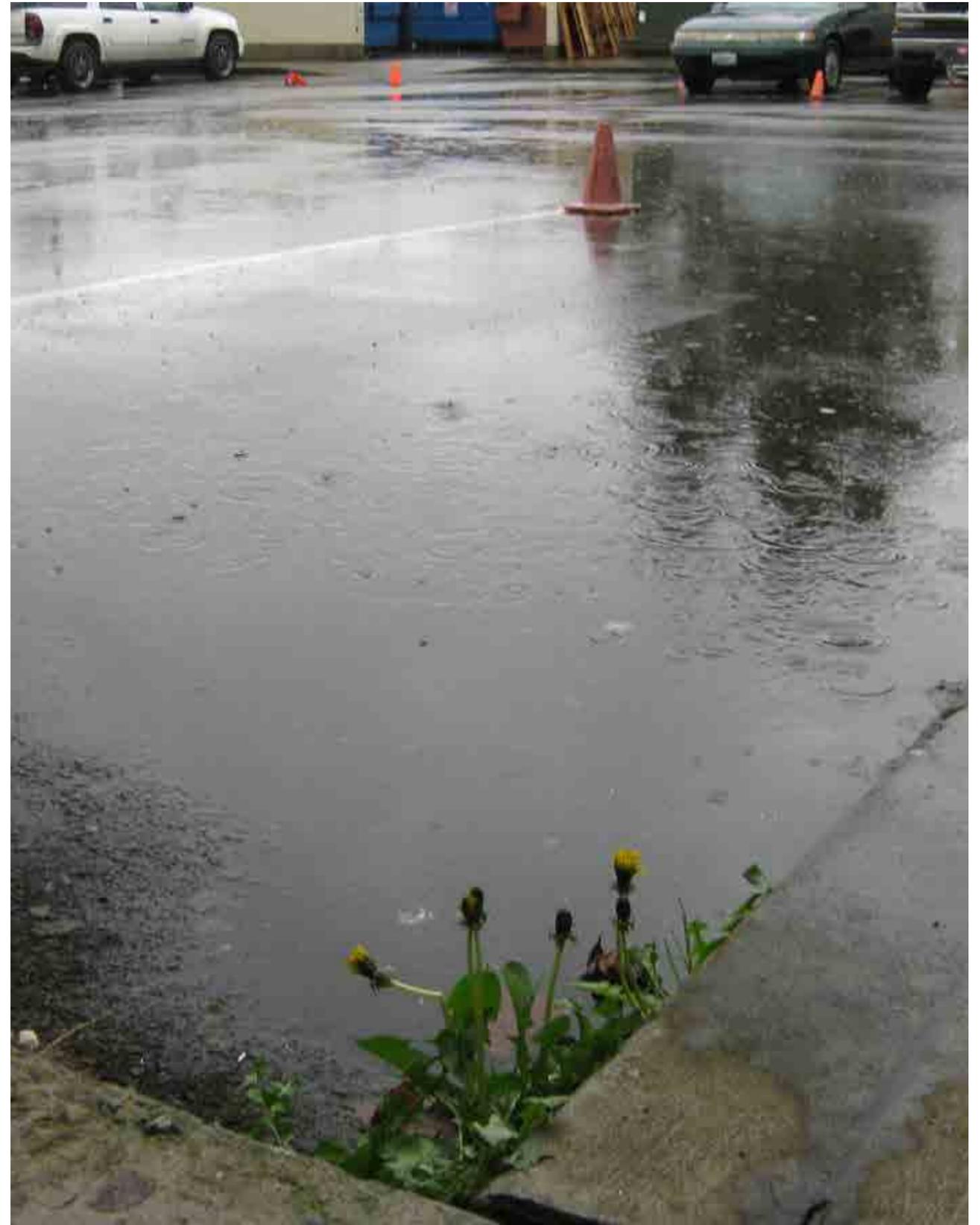


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