WE ALL LIVE IN A WATERSHED

A guide to the watersheds of Kirkland

What is a Watershed?

A *watershed* is an area of land bounded by hills – a natural sink. It directs rain and the water that runs off our properties to a common body of water, such as a creek, stream, river or lake.

When it rains, the water from a small watershed may travel to a local creek. That creek will flow into a larger stream, like Forbes Creek, which in turn collects water from a larger watershed. Forbes Creek then flows into Lake Washington, which has an even larger watershed. **We all live in a watershed.**

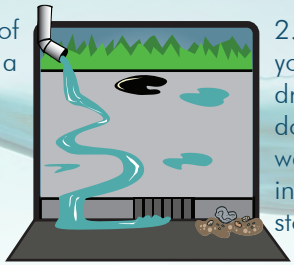
Which watershed do you live in?

There are 11 watersheds in the City of Kirkland. All of these watersheds drain into the Cedar River Lake Washington Watershed.

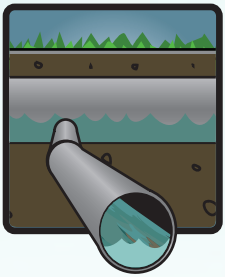
Your watershed, your home

What path does the rain take?

1. Rain hits you roof and flows through a downspout and onto your lawn or driveway.



2. Whatever is on your lawn or driveway (fertilizers, dog poop, oil) is washed directly into the nearest storm drain.



3. From the drain, the water flows through a series of man-made pipes.

4. This water flows **untreated** from the pipe into a nearby body of water.

What's the problem?

Our homes, businesses and roads are all located within watersheds. During construction, vegetation is often removed and replaced by concrete, asphalt, and buildings. As a result, rain has fewer places to soak into soil and the amount of water rushing down storm drains during a rain storm increases. This water, called *urban runoff*, picks up pollutants from roads and lawns, including motor oil, lawn chemicals, pet waste, litter, and soil along the way, before flowing into streams, rivers, and lakes – **without treatment.**

The large amount of untreated water flowing through our stormwater system and into our streams and lakes has lasting negative health, environmental, and economic effects on our watershed and our community. Local activities affect upstream and downstream neighbors. **We all live downstream.**

Watershed words

Impervious surfaces – materials that prevent water absorption (ex. Roads, roofs, & parking lots). Stormwater runs off these surfaces rapidly, collecting pollutants without passing through any filtering substance

Storm drain – Rectangular grates with slats normally located near the edge of the street. These grates collect water which then flows to the nearest stream or lake

Stormwater - water that is generated by rainfall and is often routed into drain systems

Urban runoff – rainwater from city streets & property that can contain oil, gas, litter, sediment, pesticides & other pollutants

Watershed – an area of land bounded by hills that directs rain to a common body of water, such as a creek, stream, river or lake

Top 5 ways to protect our watershed

- Wash your vehicle at a commercial car wash or on your lawn with phosphorus-free soap.
- Never discard trash or yard waste down storm drains or in the street.
- Pick up your pet's waste, even in the yard.
- Use lawn chemicals sparingly – or not at all.
- Carpool, bus, bike, walk.