

# STORM WATER INFORMATION

## WHAT IS STORM WATER?

In general terms, stormwater is rainfall or snow melt that flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces such as rooftops, driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater runoff from naturally soaking into the ground. Stormwater runoff can pick up pollutants such as fertilizers, pesticides, animal waste, debris, and oil and other other toxins. This untreated runoff flows into storm drains and eventually reaches streams, rivers, lakes, and oceans.

## THE CHEHALIS RIVER BASIN WATERSHED

The City of Centralia lies within the Chehalis River Basin Watershed. A watershed is the region draining into a river system, or other body of water. In this case, the receiving waters are the Chehalis River.

## STORMWATER AND THE CITY OF CENTRALIA

The City of Centralia has developed a comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP), outlining the City's efforts to prevent stormwater pollution and minimize runoff. Generally, the SWMP has five components: public education, public outreach, involvement in the formation of an illicit dumping elimination program, modified regulations for new and redevelopment and construction, as well as a pollution prevention program to be implemented within City operations. Currently, the City is responsible for the maintenance of 22 miles of storm pipes, 2,115 catch basins, dry wells and manholes.

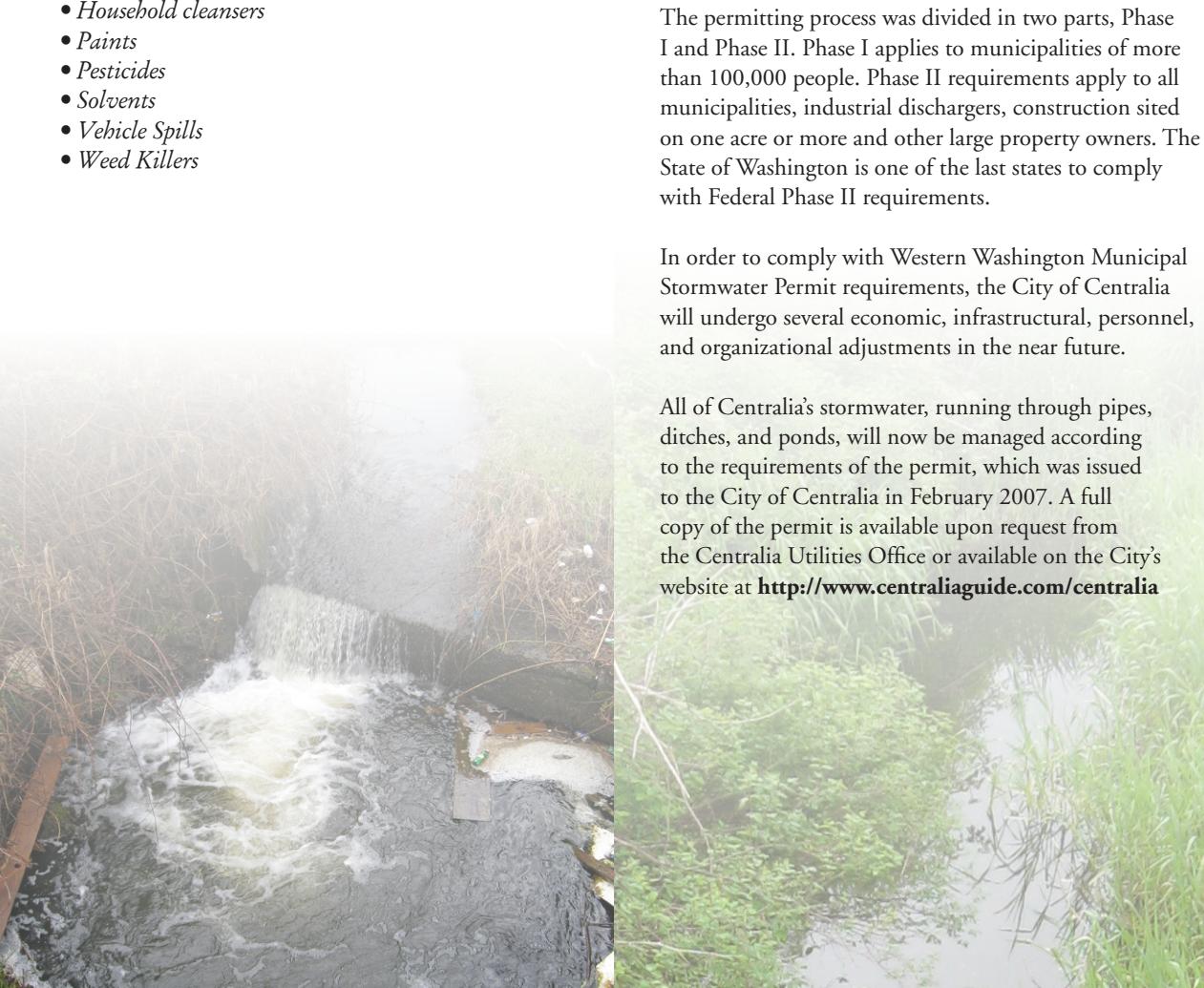
Centralia's unique location on the banks of the Chehalis River makes it extremely important that stormwater runoff be adequately treated and discharged in the cleanest form possible. The Chehalis River is not only comprised of the water that runs between its banks, but also of all the water that enters from the communities that line its shores.

Working together the City of Centralia and its community can improve the quality of our valuable water resources, ensuring availability for future generations.

## WHAT IS AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?

An illicit discharge is defined as "any discharge into a municipal storm sewer system that is not composed entirely of stormwater." Some of the pollutants that fall into this category are:

- *Car wash wastewater*
- *Gas and motor oil*
- *Kitchen grease/oil*
- *Household cleaners*
- *Paints*
- *Pesticides*
- *Solvents*
- *Vehicle Spills*
- *Weed Killers*



The permitting process was divided in two parts, Phase I and Phase II. Phase I applies to municipalities of more than 100,000 people. Phase II requirements apply to all municipalities, industrial dischargers, construction sites on one acre or more and other large property owners. The State of Washington is one of the last states to comply with Federal Phase II requirements.

## FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Stormwater controls began with the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), originally drafted in 1972, for which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is directly responsible. The intent of the Clean Water Act is to restore all "water of the United States" to "fishable" and "swimmable" conditions. Under this act, all discharges require a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Changes made to the CWA by Congress in 1987 required that all municipalities apply for NPDES permits.

In order to comply with Western Washington Municipal Stormwater Permit requirements, the City of Centralia will undergo several economic, infrastructural, personnel, and organizational adjustments in the near future.

All of Centralia's stormwater, running through pipes, ditches, and ponds, will now be managed according to the requirements of the permit, which was issued to the City of Centralia in February 2007. A full copy of the permit is available upon request from the Centralia Utilities Office or available on the City's website at <http://www.centraliaguide.com/centralia>

## PREVENTING RUNOFF POLLUTION BEGINS AT HOME

PET WASTE contains bacteria, viruses and parasites which can threaten human health and cause algae blooms and recreational water closures.

- *Clean up after pets using a scooper or plastic grocery bag. Seal the bag before placing it in the trash.*
- *Use a covered litter box outside for cats.*
- *Do not flush pet waste down the toilet.*

FERTILIZERS contain nitrogen and phosphorus primary nutrients of algae growth. As algae decays it uses up oxygen in water that fish need to survive.

- *"Grasscycle" Leave grass clippings on the lawn to act as a natural fertilizer and soil conditioner.*
- *Never fertilize before it rains.*
- *Use drop spreaders instead of broadcast spreaders for more precise fertilizer application.*
- *Keep fertilizer off sidewalks, streets and driveways.*

PESTICIDES & HERBICIDES are poisonous and pose a health threat to humans and plants and beneficial insects.

- *Weed by hand and use natural predators such as ladybugs to control pests.*
- *Use native plants which are pest and disease resistant.*
- *Use pesticides as a last resort - read the label, use sparingly and spot treat only.*
- *Never apply pesticides before it rains.*

YARD WASTE, such as leaves and grass clippings, that are blown into streets, storm drains or drainage ditches can cause algae blooms, oxygen depletion and fish kills in waterways. Clogged storm drains and ditches can also cause property flooding.

- *Do not blow or sweep yard waste into a street, storm drain, ditch or waterway.*
- *Leave grass clippings on the lawn to act as a natural fertilizer and soil conditioner.*
- *Compost leaves and grass clippings and use as a mulch for flower beds, landscape beds and gardens.*
- *Bag or containerize waste for yard waste collection.*

OVER-WATERING can cause lawn disease and can transport fertilizers, pesticides and yard waste into waterways.

- Soil should be nearly dry before watering.
- Water slowly so that water doesn't run off or compact the soil.
- Use a can to measure the amount of water you are putting on the lawn; 1/2-1" is plenty of water for most lawns.
- Water the lawn, not the sidewalk, street or driveway.
- Water in the early morning to discourage disease and reduce evaporation.
- Plant drought and disease-tolerant native plants to reduce watering needs.

CAR WASHING soaps and detergents destroy the external mucus layers of fish that protect them from bacteria and parasites. Many detergents contain phosphates which promote excessive algae and aquatic weed growth.

- Wash your car on the grass to let soap and dirt be filtered naturally by the soil. It will not harm the grass.
- Use phosphate-free soaps and detergents.
- Use a commercial car wash; the dirty water is sent to a wastewater treatment plant or is recycled on-site.

AUTO FLUIDS are often poured down storm drains or leaked onto the pavement.

- Properly dispose of auto fluids. Recycle used oil, antifreeze and batteries at an auto parts store or the county landfill.
- Clean up vehicle leaks or fluid spills immediately. Kitty litter or sawdust absorb spills well.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE (HHW) such as paint, cleaners or other household chemicals often contain toxins, heavy metals and nutrients. When these pollutants enter waterways, they impact water quality, wildlife and human health.

- Properly dispose of all HHW.
- Read labels carefully and use products correctly.
- Use non-toxic product alternatives.
- Do not pour HHW down storm drains or household drains.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS that are poorly maintained or leaking can release nutrients and bacteria into the environment. This can cause algae blooms, groundwater contamination and public health concerns.

- Inspect and pump your septic system every 3-5 years.
- Do not park on the septic system drain field or add chemicals to the septic tank.
- Reduce the amount of solids entering the system from garbage disposals and other means.

## YOUR PART...

### ACTIONS

In addition to structural Best Management Practices (BMP) non-structural BMP's are everyday actions or behaviors that can help improve water quality.

- Never put anything into the storm drain, drainage ditch, or creek.
- Always clean up after your pet.
- Use fertilizers and pesticides only when needed and apply the correct amounts.
- Dispose of leaves, grass clippings and other yard waste properly.
- Throw litter in the trash. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
- Recycle motor oil, antifreeze, and other auto fluids at an auto parts store or the county landfill.
- Wash your vehicle on the grass or take it to a commercial car wash.
- Check your vehicle for leaks and repair them.
- Tell a friend or neighbor how they can help protect our waterways too!

### WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO PAY?

The stormwater fee is a City user fee that property owners in the City support. Since all stormwater runoff comes from real property, each property owner in the City pays their "fair share" to plan, construct, maintain, test for pollutants, and operate the city-wide stormwater system.

The stormwater drainage system is designed for the entire City, from swales, drainage right-of-ways, canals, retention ponds, lakes, and waterways. Everyone who lives in the City of Centralia benefits when the stormwater system is well managed. The entire system is constructed and maintained for the benefit of all Centralia residents. You may not have a problem on your property or in your neighborhood, but the runoff from your property and your neighbors' property contributes to the City's overall stormwater system.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

If you observe stormwater runoff pollution occurring, such as dirty water leaving a construction site, dumping trash or chemicals into our drainage system, raw sewage discharges or other environmental concerns, please call the City of Centralia Utilities at 360-330-7512.

Chehalis River at Mellen Street



Stormwater Division

1100 N. Tower Ave  
360-330-7512