

Raise the Grade!

www.piercecountywa.org/watershedhealthdata

In late 2011, Pierce County Public Works and Utilities, Surface Water Management (SWM), initiated an effort aimed at improving the surface water quality of Minter Creek, Horn Creek, Swan Creek and Spanaway Lake.

Since 2008, Surface Water Management (SWM) has been tracking and reporting the water quality status of Pierce County waterbodies in an annual Watershed Health Report Card. Streams and lakes are *graded* on a scale of “F” (failing) to “A” (excellent) based on an index of water quality and biological indicators. Monitoring data and the Report Card are available on the web at www.piercecountywa.org/watershedhealthdata.

Also, SWM routinely inspects stormwater facilities for potential sources of pollution and rates their status of compliance with stormwater requirements. Facilities are *graded* on a scale of “1” (significant noncompliance) to “5” (exceeds requirements).

The goal of the **“Raise the Grade” initiative** is to improve water quality in Minter Creek, Horn Creek, Swan Creek and Spanaway Lake so that their existing grades and the compliance ratings of stormwater management facilities contributing pollutants to those waterbodies, are improved (“raised”).

Current Watershed Health Status

In October 2011, SWM analyzed water quality and watershed health data from each of four watersheds in the County (Puyallup, Chambers/Clover, KGI, Nisqually). A water body was selected from each watershed based on its likelihood for improvement. Criteria considered included: water quality status and trends, pollutant source identification, placement in the watershed, and stakeholder interest.

2010 grades in Pierce County’s Annual Report Card for the *Raise the Grade* waterbodies will be used as the baseline for evaluating progress:

- Minter Creek (KGI Watershed) is currently graded a **C**
- Horn Creek (Nisqually Watershed) is currently graded a **C-**

- Swan Creek (Puyallup Watershed) is currently graded a **D+**
- Spanaway Lake (Chambers/Clover Watershed) is currently graded a **C+**

Summary of Potential Actions for 2012

- Form interdisciplinary teams
- Evaluate existing data.
- Collect additional monitoring data.
- Track and identify pollutant sources
- Coordinate and involve stakeholders, including Watershed Councils, Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department, and Pierce Conservation District.
- Public communication
- Inspect stormwater facilities
- Initiate pollutant source control
- Repair failing septic systems.
- Take enforcement action against facilities in significant noncompliance with stormwater requirements
- Assess the quality and frequency of maintenance of public stormwater facilities

Contact Information

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Swan Creek: Lisa Spurrier, (253) 798-6158.

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Surface Water Management

If you would like additional information or have questions, please contact
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