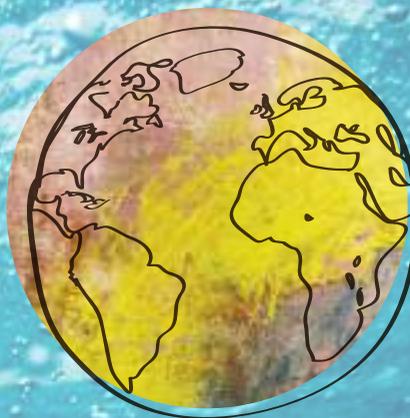


AUGUST 2016

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS
FROM PIERCE COUNTY



earth matters

the water edition



where does the rain go?

What happens to a drop of rain when it falls? It may land on a rooftop, driveway or road and travel down the street into a storm drain, ditch or stream. Rain that does not evaporate or soak into the ground runs over the land becoming "stormwater runoff." This runoff is one of the leading sources of pollution in Puget Sound and local waterways. When water runs over the ground, it picks up nasty stuff from cars, like oil and brake dust, and from yards, like fertilizers, pesticides, pet waste and other chemicals. Stormwater runoff is generally not treated before it flows into local streams, lakes, rivers and Puget Sound.

Most of the stormwater runoff in Pierce County flows through ditches into local streams and rivers with no treatment.

inside

- Non-toxic gardening
- Green moss removal
- Pet waste tips
- Morey Creek

about the water edition

The Water Edition is new in 2016 to the Earth Matters series. It focuses on surface water issues around Pierce County. The Surface Water Management division of Pierce County Public Works provides flooding and surface water quality services to unincorporated areas of the county. Property owners in Pierce County pay a service charge as part of their annual property tax statement which funds the county's surface water utility.

LATE SUMMER AND FALL

LEARN MORE AT NATURALLYARDCARE.INFO

non-toxic gardening tips

Common chemicals used in yard care can be carried by runoff to local waterways and pose risks to water quality. Late summer and early fall are a great time to get your lawn and garden ready for a beautiful spring. Chemicals are often seen as a solution, but there are some excellent non-toxic ways to get your yard in shape. Looking for personalized yard care advice? Contact Pierce County Master Gardeners (253) 798-7170; pierce.mg@wsu.edu.



Natural Lawn Care

Brown lawns are not necessarily dead. Grass varieties that go dormant in summer will turn green again after the first significant rain. Keep your dormant lawn healthy by marking sure it receives one inch of water per month. Most Northwest lawns are very acidic - improve your lawn with a fall application of lime and give it an extra boost by using organic, slow-release fertilizer.



Mulch to Keep Weeds Down

Weeds can be controlled in perennial beds and under trees with mulch. It also slows down the cooling of the soil to let root systems continue to develop over the winter. Two great and often free options for mulch are shredded leaves and arborist chips. Spread mulch or leaves 4-6 inches deep on your planting beds. Be sure not to pile mulch against tree trunks.



Plant Perennials and Trees

Fall is the best time to plant perennials and trees. Rain through the fall, winter and spring will get them established naturally. Their roots will spread through the soil in preparation for strong, healthy growth in spring. When planting, be sure to dig the hole about three times wider than the container and about as deep as the container. Carefully remove the plant from the container,

keeping the soil around the roots intact. Loosen the roots and spread them out in the hole. Set the plant or tree in the middle of the hole. For trees, be sure not to bury the collar of the tree or over-compact the soil. Usually new soil is not necessary; if you do amend the soil, mix it in with native soil. Mulch around new plants and trees, but don't pile mulch on tree trunks.



edible gardens workshops

This popular educational series provides step-by-step guidance to grow a successful and delicious vegetable garden—from seed to table. Whether you are a novice gardener or you've been planting and harvesting vegetables for years, the series offers something for everyone. Reserve your spot today!

CLASS INFORMATION

Offered February through November at five Pierce County locations:

piercecountywa.org/ediblegardens



is pet waste a problem in your neighborhood?

Pet waste can be carried by stormwater runoff to local waterways. Bacteria in pet waste can make people sick and cause water quality problems. Always scoop up pet waste and put it in the trash.

Pierce County has a program that provides free neighborhood pet waste stations. The program provides up to two dog waste stations per neighborhood, four rolls of dog waste bags per station and one sign per station. Pet waste station adopters are responsible for refilling stations with bags when the initial supply runs out.

Apply for a station for your neighborhood online at piercescountywa.org/DogWasteStation



prepare for flooding

Fall and winter flooding can have disastrous consequences. Here are a few tips to get prepared:

- Know whether you live in a flood-prone area. Request a free flood map of your property by calling (253) 798-2725 or online at piercescountywa.org/floodmap
- Buy flood insurance - there is a 30-day wait before your flood insurance will become valid - buy it now at floodsmart.gov
- Sign up for Pierce County Alert to receive emergency alerts on your cell or home phone at piercescountywa.org/alert

a solution for roof moss

There are a lot of easy-to-use products at home improvement stores, but they may be harmful to people, pets, plants and Puget Sound aquatic life. You can make your own moss remover with a few items in your kitchen.



Vinegar Solution

- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 gallon warm water
- Mix the solution and spray on affected area. Wait for the moss to turn brown and flaky and gently sweep it off.
- Moss treatment should be done annually when the roof is dry.

community tree program

Planting trees helps clean air and water, makes streets more walkable and neighborhoods healthier.

Through Pierce Conservation District's community tree program, residents can reserve up to three trees for \$20 per tree. Choose from nine trees, small and large, including one fruit tree. Go to tinyurl.com/gv6fzdg to choose your trees today. Participants will go to a short tree workshop in the fall to pick up their trees.

If you would rather choose a tree from a local nursery, go to treesareamazing.org to request a coupon for \$15 off trees from participating retailers.



featured stream: morey creek

Morey Creek is an approximately one mile long stream in the Spanaway area. It flows from Spanaway Creek, just north of the boundary of Pierce County's Bresemann Forest property, west onto Joint Base Lewis McChord where it joins Clover Creek. Morey Creek has been identified as a key stream for recovery of Coho Salmon runs to the Chambers-Clover creek basin. It serves as an important passage for fish during summer months when Clover Creek goes dry in this area.

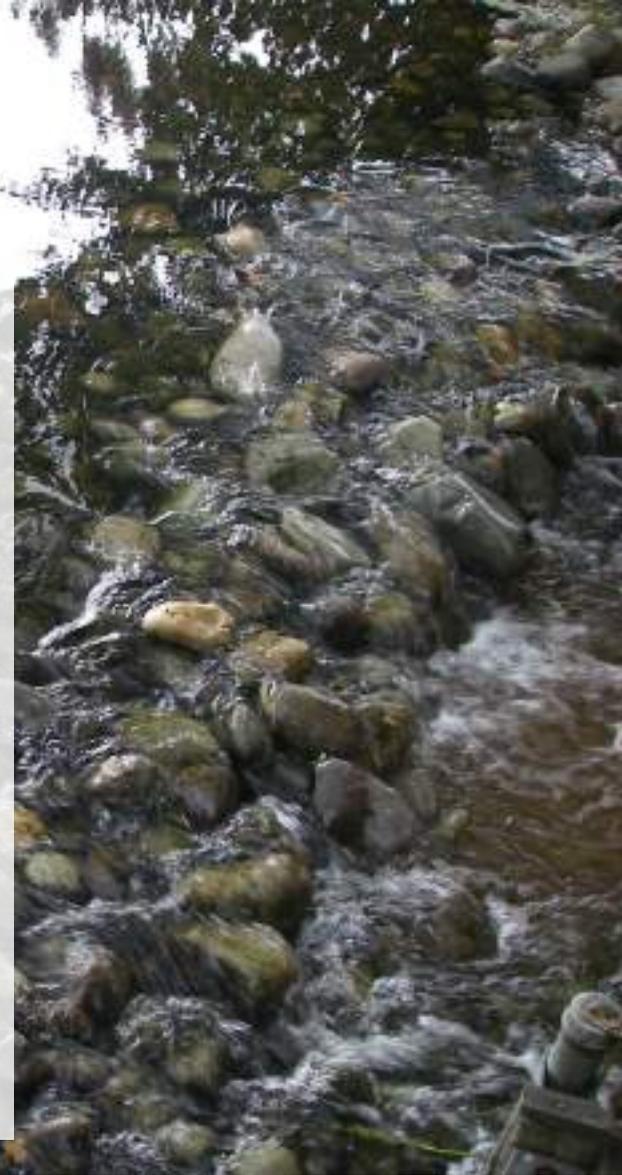
In the 1970s, McChord Air Force Base built a dam on Morey Creek to create a small fishing pond for those stationed on the base. This dam completely blocked fish migration upstream. In 2009, Pierce County built a bypass channel that allows fish to swim through a man-made stream around the dam and upstream to Spanaway Creek and Spanaway Lake.

Like other local streams, Morey Creek suffers from the effects of development which have caused warmer water temperatures and other water quality problems that prevent historic salmon runs from returning to the stream.

Simple steps residents can take to protect streams:

- Plant trees and native vegetation along the creek to provide shade.
- Reduce the use of yard care chemicals, like fertilizer and pesticides.
- Have your septic system inspected for proper function regularly.

To learn more about Morey Creek and other waterbodies in Spanaway and Parkland, join the Chambers-Clover Watershed Council. For more information go to piercecountywa.org/ccwc.



Pierce County Executive: Pat McCarthy
Pierce County Council: Doug Richardson, Chair,
Connie Ladenburg, Jim McCune, Joyce McDonald
Dan Roach, Rick Talbert, Derek Young

@PierceCo 

/PierceCountyPWU 

Non-emergency Situations
Spills in rivers, creeks, lakes or Puget Sound
Call Washington State Department of Ecology
at (360) 407-6300
Spills in a storm drain, stormwater pond, ditch
or other drainage system. Call Pierce County
Public Works at (253) 798-4274
If the problem you are reporting is within a city
or town, call that city or town to report it.
Commonly reported spills include foam,
sewage, paint and oily sheens.

Report Spills:
Emergency Situations
If the pollution is a severe threat to human
health or the environment, such as hazardous
waste, gasoline or chemical spills, call 911.

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