

## Make a lasting change

Create a project on your school grounds to make a change that will protect stormwater and the creeks, streams and rivers in our community.

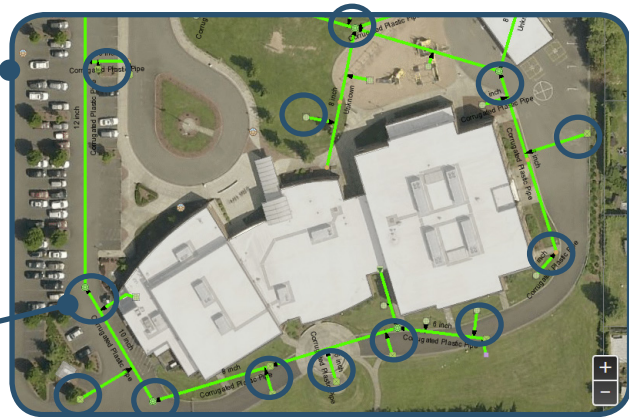
Use this form to start generating ideas for change. Verify your project with the appropriate school representatives.

### MARK THAT DRAIN!

The best way to protect stormwater from pollution is to keep pollution out of the drains in the first place. With this project, have your school identify all of the storm drains on the property. Mark the drains with messaging to let folks know “Only Rain in the Drain!”

#### Steps you can take to mark your drains

- 1. Create a map** of your school site (use an aerial photo from Clark County [MapsOnline](#) or a browser map).
- 2. Form teams to look for drains** on the school grounds. Some may be in the field, some may be in the low spot of pavement or there may be some along a curb of the parking or roadways.
- 3. Mark the location of the drains on the map.** Note on the map if the drain is near pavement that can be marked with paint or a metal medallion.
- 4. Determine how you want to mark your drains** In unincorporated Clark County, contact the Clean Water Division to learn about the [storm drain marking program](#). In the City of Vancouver, contact the Stormwater team to learn about the [medallion marking program](#).
- 5. Determine how you want to inform the school** about the project. Your team could create posters, talk at a school assembly, present to a class, etc.
- 6. Write up your project idea for approval** by the school principal and appropriate school representatives.
- 7. Once you have approval, set your plan into action!** Always remember to have adult supervision when marking drains and follow all safety guidelines. Follow the instructions in the storm drain marking kit.



Source: Google Maps



STORMWATER MEDALLION AT DRAIN

STORMWATER STENCIL AT DRAIN

*Spread the word! Let your school know about your project.*

Protecting stormwater from pollution is important to our community. Storm drains lead to our local creeks, streams and rivers. Pollution has a negative impact on healthy water for fish, wildlife and people!

**Remember, only rain down the storm drain!**



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1300 Franklin St., Vancouver, WA 98666-9810  
[www.clark.wa.gov/stormwater](http://www.clark.wa.gov/stormwater)  
(360) 397-2121

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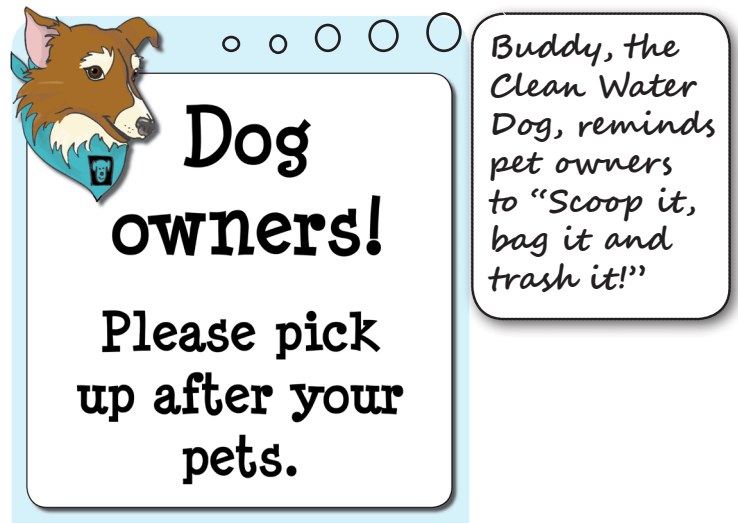
### CLEAN UP AFTER PETS - GET THE POOP OFF OF THE PLAYGROUND!

Dog poop is more than just an icky nuisance. It's a health risk to dogs and people, especially children. It's full of bacteria that can make people sick. And it's a source of stormwater pollution. When it rains, dog poop melts away and runoff carries it to storm drains, ditches and streams that feed our rivers, lakes and marine waters.

Clark County has a lot dogs, of all shapes and sizes, and their poop adds up about 15,000 tons per year. How many dogs are in the neighborhood around your school? Create a campaign to let neighbors know that when their dogs visit the school grounds, they need to pick up pet waste and properly dispose of it in the trash.

#### Key Messages for Your Campaign

- 1. Playgrounds at schools are meant for children to play.** The school staff work hard to keep the playground clean and safe. Pet owners need to pick up all pet waste and dispose of in the trash. No one wants to wash poop off of shoes!
- 2. When walking a pet, always carry bags to pick up waste.** Don't assume that the local park, dog park or school grounds will have bags for use. Tie extras to the leash for the next outing.
- 3. Don't compost or bury pet waste.** Pet waste is considered raw sewage and should be put in the trash.
- 4. The local cities and county have scoop laws that require pet owners to pick up pet waste.** People who do not honor the leash and scoop laws may be fined up to \$250.
- 5. Clark County has more than 103,000 dogs,** which together generate more than 20,000 pounds of waste per year. That is a lot of poop!
- 6. Pet waste contains bacteria and pathogens that can be harmful to people.** Don't let rain water break down the poop and wash it into the storm drains. Drains lead directly to creeks and rivers.



Clark County has several resources to help get the word out about picking up pet waste. Visit our website at: [www.clark.wa.gov/environmental-services/canines-clean-water](http://www.clark.wa.gov/environmental-services/canines-clean-water)

**How can your school start a campaign to keep pet waste off of the school grounds?**

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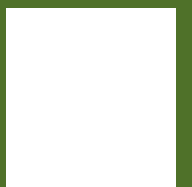


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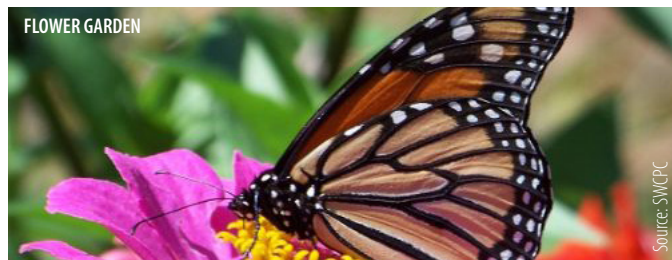
### CREATING HABITAT SAVES RAIN WATER

Look around your school grounds and determine what areas may be used for habitat (places that animals use for food, shelter or raising their young). These areas may contain trees, shrubs, groundcover, logs, rocks or other landscape features. When there is more habitat on a property, it can be a big help to stormwater.

Habitat areas capture rain water to evaporate into the air, can hold small amounts of water to be used by wildlife (such as drinking or bathing), or soak into the ground to be used by the plants. Habitat on the school grounds also adds beauty and creates new places to learn hands on lessons from the classroom.

#### TYPES OF HABITAT:

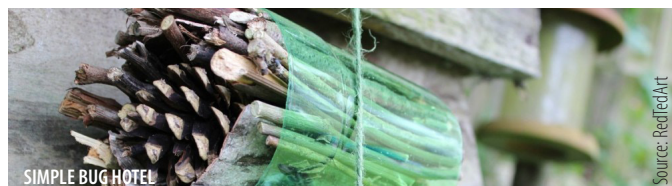
**Butterfly habitat garden** - diverse set of flowers for food and shelter



**Bird habitat garden** - Trees and shrubs provide shelter and nesting space. They can also provide food depending on the type of seeds or fruits. Add a place to capture rain water or nesting boxes.



**Insect habitat features** - diverse mix of food and shelter, such as logs, rocks, and natural materials.



#### Steps for Creating a Habitat Garden

1. **Develop your vision** - How do you want to teach at the garden? What elements are important? These answers will guide you to the type of garden. Make it a manageable size and phase the project, if needed.
2. **Pick at location at your school.** Pick a spot that is close enough to get water and sun but not too close to active areas (minimize hazards to people, like bee stings).
3. **Research the materials needed.** Consider soil amendments, plant types, habitat materials, signage, benches, pathways, etc. Use [native plants](#) when possible.
4. **Identify your volunteers.** Pull together a list of volunteers to help build AND maintain the garden.
5. **Fundraise for the necessary materials,** including excavation, soils, [compost](#), plants, mulch, hoses, etc.
6. **Get approval for your plan!** Once you have done all of your research, present your plan to the school principal and district facility staff for approval.

#### Help is available!

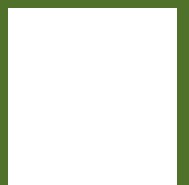
Need a how-to guide or step-by-step plan? The National Wildlife Federation has a **FREE** guide to help develop your habitat and ideas on how to teach in the space.

[www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife/Schoolyard-Habitats/Create/How-To-Guide.aspx](http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife/Schoolyard-Habitats/Create/How-To-Guide.aspx)



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### WATER CONSERVATION TEAM WORK

In the Pacific Northwest, we have water all around us, in lakes, rivers, streams, creeks and wetlands. But many properties in our community don't have water all year round. So it is important to think about ways to conserve water on sites to get through the long, hot, and dry summer days.

Form a water conservation team and create a plan for how you can conserve water on your site, not only in the building but on the school grounds, too.

### On the school grounds:

**Mulch** - one of the best ways to conserve water for the school's plants is to make sure all landscape beds and trees have a good layer of organic mulch. Mulch acts as an insulator to hold water in the soil. Work with the school grounds manager to arrange a volunteer day to spread mulch once a year.



For trees, use wood chips at 3" depth



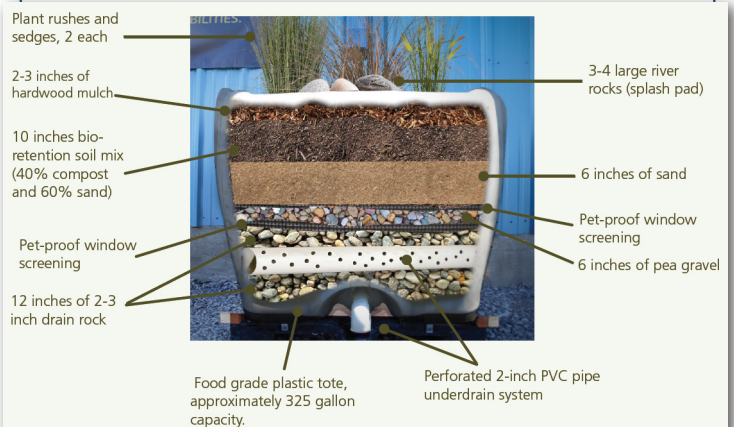
For landscape beds, use shredded mulch at 2" depth

**Reuse water** - One way to conserve water is to reuse it or give it a chance to be used BEFORE reaching a storm drain.

A great project is to build a rain garden box that uses water from a downspout to water a specially designed garden box. The Port of Vancouver uses a design called a Grattix and other designs can be used to add color to the school grounds while being a great outdoor lab!



Source: Melbourne Water



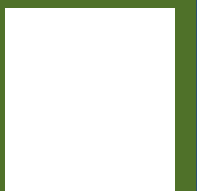
Source: Port of Vancouver (WA)

**Talk with your district's school grounds manager to see if this project will be viable at your school.**



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### PLANT A TREE and SAVE A RAIN DROP!

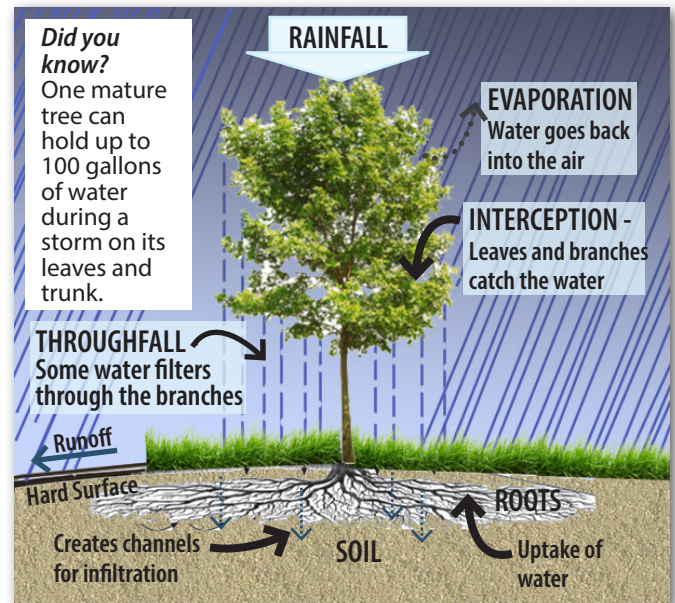
Trees play an important role in our community. They help clean the air, provide habitat for wildlife, add beauty during all seasons of the year and help protect stormwater. Trees are great at catching rain water and letting it evaporate back into the air. They also have lots of roots that create channels into the soil to let water soak into the ground. Not to mention that they use a lot of water to grow in the summer.

If your school grounds has room for more trees, consider planting a tree or two.

### Before you start....

Things to consider before planting a tree:

- Space** - Look for places on the school grounds that are away from utilities (i.e. power lines), buildings, play areas or other features. Remember, trees get big and they need lots of space.
- Type of tree** - Refer to a nursery guide, like the [WSU Extension plant guide](#), to pick just the right tree for the location. Consider the type of soil, sun exposure and how much water it will get, as well as the aesthetic quality. While seeds or cones provide interest, make sure they don't drop where people walk.
- Maintenance** - Form a volunteer team to help care for the tree until it is established on the site, usually 2-3 years. This will include watering, adding mulch and pulling weeds.
- Materials** - Planting a tree is pretty easy but does need to be done properly to ensure its future health. Make sure you have the right equipment to dig a big enough hole, high quality compost material to backfill the hole, stakes to brace the tree, and future maintenance materials (i.e. access to water - buckets, hose, etc.).



### Trees + Rain = lots of water saved!

Write down the location for planting, type of tree and maintenance ideas. Present to your principal and appropriate school representative for approval. Then you can dig in and start planting next winter!

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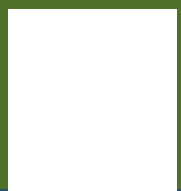
### Help is available!

In the county, contact your local nursery for tips on selection and installation. In the City of Vancouver, contact the [Urban Forestry Division](#) for information.



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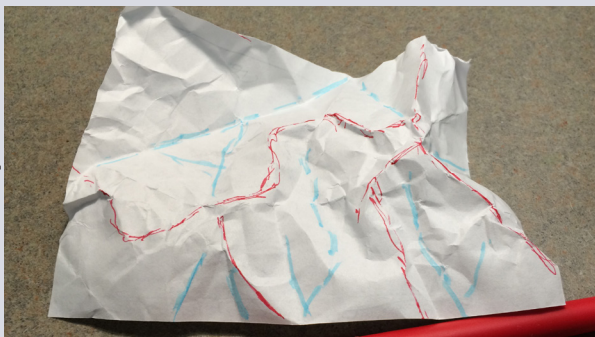
### WHAT IS YOUR SCHOOL'S WATERSHED

Learn what is a watershed (Activity Sheet 1) and determine the watershed(s) on your school property. Have your team create an educational program to teach about your school's watershed. Your program can include signage (on the school grounds and in the school), a presentation to your class/school, or other information messaging such as a video.

#### Make a watershed:

To help explain what a watershed is, create a simple model! Follow these steps:

1. Take a 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper and crumple tightly into a ball.
2. Un-crumple the paper but don't smooth it out.
3. Use a red marker to mark the ridges (tallest lines) across the paper (these are your mountains).
4. Use a blue marker to mark the lowest lines across the paper (these are your rivers).
5. Create hypotheses about how "rain" would fall and move across your paper landscape.
6. Use a spray bottle with water to create rain. Where did the water go? Did you create lakes in a low spot? Did you create a main river to carry the water off of the paper?
7. Create a second "watershed" and drop some crumbs, dirt or other tiny objects on your paper. What happens when you spray the paper? Where does the "pollution" go?



Modified from the Alice Ferguson Foundation

#### Tell your school's watershed story!

From Activity Sheet 1, what watershed is your school in (from the Clark County watershed map)?

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Identify your school drains from Activity Sheet 2. What is the nearest creek, river or stream that these drain to?

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Does your school drain to more than one waterbody? If so, what is the name of the other waterbody (i.e. creek name, wetland, pond)?

NOW, create an educational messaging program to let your school's students, staff, families and neighbors know which watershed they live in and why it is important to protect it from pollution.

Get approval from your principal and tell your story!

#### Here are some ideas:

- Make a sign to place outside near a storm drain
- Make a sign to place inside the school building
- Make a presentation to your school at an assembly



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