Locate your septic system and reserve drainfield. Protect septic tank, drainfield and reserve area from driving, parking, burning, or standing or flowing water. Find out how much wastewater the system can handle daily and avoid overloading it. Always use liquid, non-phosphate detergents. Never put chemicals, food, grease, oil, antibiotics, plastic, cigarettes, diapers, or feminine products down household drains. Remember, wet areas or odors mean trouble. Call the Kitsap County Health District at 360-337-5235.

Check septic tank every 3 years. Pump when needed.

Store covered farm manure away from water sources.

Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways/walkways.

Fix car leaks.

Pull weeds instead of using chemicals. Use organic pest controls like soap washes or predators. Use small amounts of organic low phosphorus fertilizers and carefully follow directions.

Plant native plants. They don't need chemicals, fertilizers, or watering and provide habitat for insects and birds that eat pests. Native plants also slow and filter stormwater.

Keep storm drains, infiltration systems, and gutters clean. Direct stormwater away from homes and into planted areas.*

*CAUTION: If you live on a shoreline bluff, seek professional advice regarding drainage methods. Saturation of soils can lead to landslides and slope failures.

Storm drains are connected to streams and beaches. Keep them clean.

Preserve natural streambeds and drainages. Get permits to fill or dredge.

Disperse boat waste at a certified marine dump station.

Double bag and put pet waste in the trash.

Perform boat maintenance away from water. Do not rinse spills. Clean up spilled fluids with kitty litter or sand and dispose in trash.

Wash your car/boat at a car wash. If washing at home, use phosphate-free liquid soap, little water and wash on lawn away from drainfield.

Dispose of household hazardous waste properly (paints, solvents, chemicals, etc.). Call the Open Line at 360-337-5777 for information.

Compost to help soils absorb runoff; prevent compaction; and to keep yard waste out of ditches and waterways where it becomes unwanted fertilizer. Keep compost under cover away from beaches, wetlands, and streams.

Seed and mulch bare soil before the rainy season. Plant a native vegetative buffer to filter pollutants, discourage waterfowl, reduce shoreline and streambank erosion, and provide shade, insects for young fish, and habitat.

Please see the Resource Section on the back to help you use these tips.
Whether we live next to a stream, shoreline, or miles from either our everyday actions affect local water quality.

We all live in a watershed, an area of land that drains to a common waterway such as a stream, lake, estuary, wetland, or even the ocean. Some people call it a drainage basin. Whatever you call it, it can be directly affected by our individual actions.

So how do we affect the watershed?

We build houses, driveways, yards, businesses, parking lots, roads, etc., creating hard surfaces. These hard surfaces keep water from soaking into the ground. This increases runoff, bypassing the natural filtering of native soil. The amount and speed of the runoff rushing through ditches and pipes to streams can cause flooding, erosion, and destroy habitat.

Hard surfaces also provide an easy route to our waterways. Runoff picks up and mixes with whatever is on the ground and carries pollutants to our waters. Pollutants can come from vehicle or boat fluids and/or washing; failing septic systems; garden and lawn practices; animal waste; debris and waste washed or dumped into storm drains; or human waste from boats.

Look inside this brochure for suggestions on how to minimize your impact on our streams, lakes, and bays.

Here's a real-life example!

All animals need oxygen to live. Water critters get theirs from oxygen dissolved in the water. If the dissolved oxygen (DO) level is low, the water critters cannot survive.

One of our local waterways is in trouble. The DO levels in Hood Canal are dangerously low. These low DO levels are due, in part, to natural causes, but our actions can make it worse. Nutrients encourage the growth of plants and algae in the water. As plants and algae die and decompose, they use dissolved oxygen, taking it away from the critters that live there. Nutrients can come in the form of fertilizers, septic effluents, pet waste and grass clippings—all of which can easily be kept out of Hood Canal and other waterways.
Whether we live next to a stream, shoreline, or miles from either our everyday actions affect local water quality. We all live in a watershed, an area of land that drains to a common waterway such as a stream, lake, estuary, wetland, or even the ocean. The amount of local pollution is in trouble. The DO levels in Hood Canal are dangerously low. These low levels are due in part to nutrient enrichment of the water and debits of plants and algae in the water. As these nutrients and debris are carried downstream, the dissolved oxygen (DO) levels are low. The animals need oxygen to live. Water critters get theirs from oxygen dissolved in the water. If the dissolved oxygen (DO) level is low, the water critters cannot survive.

Here’s a real-life example!

Low Dissolved Oxygen in Hood Canal:
Puget Sound Action Team
1-800-54-SOUND, www.psat.wa.gov/Programs/hood_canal.htm
Volunteer Opportunities in Hood Canal:
Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group
360-275-3575, www.hcseg.com

Septic Systems:
Kitsap County Solid Waste
360-337-5777, www.kitsapgov.com
Washington State Department of Ecology
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/shorelan.html
Household Hazardous Waste Disposal:
Kitsap County Solid Waste

Boat Waste:
www.boatwashington.org
Landscaping/Native Plants:
Kitsap County Solid Waste, 360-337-5777
Best Choices for Kitsap Landscapes,
ftp://kcwppub3.co.kitsap.wa.us/pw/sw/default.htm/
Kitsap Conservation District, 360-337-7171,
www.kitsapcd.org
Farm Animal Management/Waste:
Kitsap Conservation District
360-337-7171, www.kitsapcd.org

Stormwater:
Kitsap County Surface and Stormwater Management (SSWM) Program
360-337-7777, www.kitsapgov.com/sswm
Shoreline Assistance:
Kitsap County Department of Community Development,
www.kitsapgov.com/dcd/shorelines/sh_county_info.htm
Washington State Department of Ecology
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/seas/shorelan.html

Porous Surfaces:
Puget Sound Action Team Low Impact Development Manual,
1-800-54-SOUND, www.psat.wa.gov/Programs/LID.htm

This brochure is a cooperative effort of Kitsap County Health District, Kitsap County Public Works Surface and Stormwater Management (SSWM) Program, and Washington Sea Grant. Portions of this project were produced with support from the Puget Sound Action Team and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10.

Copies of this brochure are available by contacting Kitsap County Open Line, 360-337-5777.