For more information on these and other ways we can modify our activities to help restore clean water and salmon, please call the Oregon Building Industry Association at (503) 378-9066 or the Division of Land Conservation and Development at (503) 373-0050.

This guide for homebuilders is part of a series of lists targeting a wide variety of groups in Oregon. For information on other guides in this series, please contact the Governor's Natural Resources Office at (503) 378-3589.

Homebuilders

Working together, Oregonians have the opportunity to help restore clean water and wild salmon for the benefit of us all and for future generations. The suggestions in this guide are practical changes we can consider making in our daily land management, work and lives to support this statewide restoration effort. These suggestions do not substitute for any local, state or federal legal regulations.

THE OREGON PLAN
for salmon & watersheds

Ten ways homebuilders can help restore clean water and salmon

activities that affect erosion

- When planning where to place a house, think about activities that will occur both during construction and once people live there that could affect erosion. Erosion increases the amount of sediment that enters streams either directly or indirectly through storm drains. This increased sediment load acts to cover gravel spawning and rearing beds needed by salmon and reduces the amount of oxygen available to fish and other aquatic life.

value of streams and streambanks

- Consider the economic and aesthetic value of healthy, fish-bearing streams and shady streambanks. Natural, pristine riparian areas and waterways can be desirable to homebuyers, and preserving these areas benefit aquatic life by reducing erosion, providing shade and enhancing habitat for fish and wildlife.

silt barriers

- Use and maintain silt barriers during construction such as straw bales, bio-filter bags and silt fences to trap sediment and keep it out of storm drains. Build retention areas or use reverse grading to trap water that could otherwise carry soil from the building site into the drainage system.

soil and debris runoff

- Avoid grading during rainy periods and plant vegetation as quickly as possible to reduce the amount of soil and debris that can wash away from a site. Vegetation helps stabilize the soil to keep it in place and filter the water that runs off a construction site before it reaches the stream.

equipment use

- Keep heavy equipment away from streambanks and out of the stream channel. Equipment use near streams can increase erosion, disturb riparian vegetation, damage wetlands and degrade instream habitat needed by fish and other aquatic life.

yard and lawn debris

- Keep yard and lawn clippings away from streambanks. Debris piles can suffocate native streamside plants that stabilize the bank and shade the water, keeping it clean and cool. Yard and lawn clippings can also introduce exotic plants or weeds to the waterway, which can alter the aquatic community and reduce levels of dissolved oxygen in the water when they begin to break down.

large woody debris

- Leave large wood in streams. Naturally occurring woody debris creates pools and refuge areas where fish spawn, hide and rest. The instream structure created by large wood also provides important habitat for aquatic insects, which are an essential food source for fish and other aquatic life.

construction waste

- Quickly dispose of construction waste by recycling or making materials available for reuse. Chemicals and other wastes drain to streams and pollute the water that fish and people need to survive.

stream channels

- Seek advice and learn about protective regulations before altering stream channels. The course of a stream affects the water speed, temperature, amount of sediment transported and various other factors that affect instream habitat for fish and aquatic life.

share intentions

- Communicate your intent to prevent erosion and protect riparian vegetation to construction workers. On-the-job workers may come up with new ideas for doing the job better with less impact on the watershed.