

# Homeowners

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.

For more information on these and other ways we can modify our activities to help restore clean water and salmon, please call Oregon Water Resources Department at (503) 378-8455 for information on water conservation, or Metro at (503) 234-3000 for information on disposal of household hazardous wastes.

This guide for homeowners 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.



**THE OREGON PLAN**  
*for salmon & watersheds*

# Ten ways homeowners can help restore clean water and salmon

## **maintenance practices**

- Repair leaky faucets and toilets, replace washers in hose connectors, and clean downspouts and gutters manually, without using a hose. By taking easy steps to conserve water, more water can be reserved instream to benefit water quality, fish, other aquatic life or meet other water needs.

## **water efficient appliances**

- Retrofit with water efficient appliances. Ultra low-flush toilets, for example, use as little as 1.6 gallons per flush. Every flush of a standard toilet uses five to seven gallons. A water efficient tumble action clothes washer uses as little as 20 gallons of water per load. Standard washers can use as much as 45 gallons per load.

## **energy conservation**

- Turn off lights when leaving a room, keep your thermostat low, and only run dishwashers and washing machines when full. Replace incandescent light bulbs with fluorescent bulbs which can save one-quarter of the energy and last ten times as long. Set your water heater thermostat between 120 and 130 degrees Fahrenheit, wrap old water heaters in an R-11 insulation blanket and wrap water pipes with R-3 pipe insulation. Appropriate maintenance of water heaters and pipes will reduce energy use and increase energy efficiency. Taken cumulatively, energy conservation can reduce our demand for power, which requires the consumption of natural resources to produce.

## **sweeping paved areas**

- Instead of hosing, sweep sidewalks and driveways and put the sweepings in the garbage. You will save water and prevent pollutants and debris from entering streams from storm drains.

## **stormwater runoff**

- Disconnect gutter downspouts that run stormwater directly to streets and streams. Use chains or other techniques that direct runoff through the soil to “biofilter” potential pollutants.

## **composting**

- Compost yard debris in a contained, level area away from creeks and wetlands. Compost is a good way to recycle yard debris and creates an excellent source fertilizer and mulch. Ensure compost areas are contained to prevent organic materials from washing into streams and wetlands where they can reduce the dissolved oxygen needed by aquatic life.

## **car washing**

- Use automatic car washes that recycle water and properly dispose of detergents, or park and wash your car on grass instead of paved surfaces. Allowing pollutants to filter through soil reduces the waste that enters our waterways.

## **disposal of oil and chemicals**

- Never dump oil or other chemicals down storm drains and make sure these pollutants are not leaking onto driveways or other paved surfaces. Oil and chemicals on pavement can wash directly into storm drains which discharge into waterways. In streams and rivers, these substances degrade water quality and are hazardous to fish and other aquatic life. Take toxic substances to disposal and recycling facilities. Cover any oil or chemical spills with absorbent materials, such as sand or kitty litter, then collect and dispose of these materials in the garbage.

## **pressure washing**

- Pressure wash with water alone or with an organic recipe if needed, and find ways to keep paint flakes, grease, and other pollutants from washing into storm drains, ditches or waterways. Collecting and disposing of dirt and grime in the garbage, or filtering it through soil keeps toxic and other materials from polluting streams.

## **reduce, reuse, recycle**

- Reduce, reuse, recycle! Finding new ways to use old things, giving used items to people who can reuse them, and sending materials to recycling centers helps conserve our limited resources for the benefit of future generations and our environment.