

How development harms the Sound

One house has little impact on stormwater. But grouped together they add up, blocking rainwater from soaking into the ground, polluting stormwater and damaging streams. Every year around Puget Sound, we level as much as 10,000 acres of forest as we gradually make way for the 4 million people who could move here this century.

UNDEVELOPED LAND

STORMWATER ABSORBED

Only about 1 percent of rain reaches streams and the Sound as surface runoff; the rest is absorbed by soil and vegetation.

ABSORBED WATER
RECHARGES
GROUNDWATER

STREAMS

Absorbed water trickles into streams, keeping them cooler.

THE EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENT

IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

Streets, roofs, sidewalks and driveways prevent water from being absorbed, creating stormwater runoff.

RUNOFF

Surface runoff flows into creeks and streams, causing flooding and erosion. Streams are more prone to drying up during a drought. Higher water temperatures harm salmon.

IMPERVIOUS
SURFACES

CHEMICALS AND WASTE

Runoff picks up chemicals, including oil and gas from cars; copper from brakes; household chemicals including flame retardants, pesticides and weed killers; animal waste; and sewage.

RUNOFF

GROUNDWATER

STREAM

Stormwater carries
chemicals into Sound

PUGET
SOUND

Source: Environmental Protection Agency

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