



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Why the emphasis on stormwater?

A. **Stormwater is one of the leading vectors for water pollution nationwide and is a leading cause of pollution in Puget Sound.** According to the Washington State Department of Ecology, on an average day, approximately 143,000 lbs of toxic materials are released into Puget Sound via stormwater runoff.

The ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** campaign was initiated by STORM, a coalition of more than fifty counties and cities around Puget Sound working together to address State municipal stormwater permit requirements. These requirements are intended to reduce water pollution.

The Puget Sound Partnership, a state agency working to restore and protect Puget Sound, recognized the impacts of polluted stormwater on the health of Puget Sound, and combined resources with the STORM coalition to form ***Puget Sound Starts Here***.

Q. Why does ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** focus on residential activities?

A. **Residential neighborhoods are the largest source of stormwater pollution, according to the Washington State Department of Ecology.** The residential practices that contribute to stormwater pollution are many and complex, and include many common day-to-day practices.

Because of this complexity, budget constraints, and challenges associated with fostering behavioral change, ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** selected a few priority residential behaviors as a first step in its stormwater awareness media campaign.

By targeting residential audiences ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** also dispels the myth that the majority of pollution comes from "large industrial point sources." Although the EPA and others have singled out nonpoint source stormwater pollution as the leading threat to the nation's waterways, social research indicates that the public still consider "large industries" as the largest source of pollution. This myth reduces our ability to take responsibility for our actions, and their impacts on lakes, rivers, streams, and Puget Sound.

Q. How were these activities selected?

A. **The highlighted practices were selected through a multi-step process that combined the input from water quality scientists, outreach specialists, and social scientists.** ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** consulted with 28 water quality specialists working around in municipalities around the Sound. This information was combined with input from communications professionals, social marketing experts, and social research gathered by jurisdictions throughout Puget Sound.

Puget Sound Starts Here began with a list of 43 commonly recommended household practices to reduce stormwater pollution. An evaluation team, consisting of communications and water

quality professionals from local governments around Puget Sound, evaluated and prioritized the list based on:

- **Impact:** the effect the behavior will likely have on aquatic life, human health, and biological integrity
- **Willingness:** how willing the target audience would be to adopt the behavior
- **Supply:** the extent to which the behavior is already being promoted by other agencies or organizations
- **Organization fit:** how well the behavior aligns with STORM's mission and priorities
- **Social marketing:** how effective social marketing can be in influencing adoption of the behavior
- **Mass media fit:** how effective mass media can be in influencing adoption of the behavior

A smaller team then conducted a secondary evaluation based on:

- Information from existing programs
- Scientific literature
- Favoring preventative actions over interventions
- Order of magnitude estimates of the impacts of each behavior

The final list was divided into two tiers of activities:

TIER 1:

- Yard Care
- Pet Waste Management
- Car Washing
- Auto Care

TIER 2:

- Increase Pervious Surfaces
- Increase Tree Cover
- Household Hazardous Waste Management

Q. Doesn't focusing on dog poop, yard care, and car washing oversimplify what it will take to really recover Puget Sound?

A. ***Puget Sound Starts Here* emphasizes a few simple things residents can do at home. On their own, these behaviors will not save Puget Sound. They are a first step, a gateway, to a larger suite of beneficial practices.**

- **Social research clearly shows that most Puget Sound residents do not recognize that Puget Sound is in trouble.** Most residents do not recognize the impacts of polluted stormwater on Puget Sound's health nor do they recognize the impacts of their day to day activities on local water bodies.
- **Residents consistently ask for a few simple low-cost things they can do at home.** Social research also shows that residents conceptually want clean water and salmon, but that clean water and salmon are not effective motivators to personal action.
- **Market research tells us that when asked to do more than two or three things, residents simply tune-out the entire message.** Stormwater professionals sometimes bristle at the notion that there are two or three things that could save Puget Sound. Residents are the target audience, however, not stormwater professionals.

- **Our efforts are where recycling was twenty years ago.** Twenty years ago, we asked residents to recycle bottles and cans. That narrow activity was a stretch for many people. If we had asked them at that time to recycle paper, pizza boxes, yard waste, food scraps and fifteen kinds of plastic, recycling likely would have failed. Instead, these practices are now the norm and 50% of Seattle's waste stream is recycled. As recent media coverage of car washing practices reflects, stormwater practices are still at the bottles and cans stage.

Q. Why doesn't ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** focus on transportation?

A. **There are already a variety of programs addressing transportation issues.** Considering the breadth and scope of those efforts, ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** instead chose to focus on other beneficial practices. It's also important to consider that ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** is a regional campaign and that a large portion of Puget Sound is rural. Transportation impacts may seem obvious to urban residents, but to rural residents the connection is far less tangible. ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** instead chose to focus on practices more common across the region.

Q. Why doesn't ***Puget Sound Starts Here*** focus on land use?

A. **Other forums and processes already exist to address land use issues. Before *Puget Sound Starts Here*, there was no forum enabling Puget Sound municipalities to address water pollution at a regional mass-media scale. *Puget Sound Starts Here* was started by a coalition of municipalities working collectively to address State municipal stormwater permit requirements. Those requirements include public awareness of a variety of residential stormwater management practices.**