

Why is Dog Poop a Problem?

When it rains, water washes pollution off the land into Washington's many waterways. Rainwater runoff carries bacteria and other disease-causing pathogens from dog poop into storm drains, down roadside ditches, and into streams and Puget Sound. Poop contaminates shellfish beds, beaches, and marine wildlife.

Fecal coliform bacteria for animal and human waste is a significant contributor to pollution in Puget Sound and cleaning it up part of the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda – the regional plan for protecting and restoring Puget Sound.

Puget Sound is home to an estimated 1.2 million dogs. Those dogs produce poop roughly equivalent in volume to the human waste produced by a city of 300,000 people. Unlike human waste, most dog waste ends up on the ground in yards, parks, and wherever people let dogs roam. We don't need to look to third-world countries to find sewage problems. We have one right here – literally in our backyards.

Yes, it's true that bears poop in the woods, and so do deer, coyotes, and geese. But in our urban and suburban areas, dogs exist in higher densities and produce waste in far greater amounts than any other large wildlife.