

Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team

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Learn about innovative ways to protect waterways from development

OLYMPIA - An informative book offering innovative techniques for builders and developers, local planners, engineers and others to better protect Puget Sound from the harmful effects of development is now available.

The Puget Sound Action Team (Action Team) recently compiled examples of more than 30 projects, programs and ordinances using an innovative approach to develop land and manage stormwater. The innovative approaches, known as low impact developments, are highlighted in *Natural Approaches to Stormwater Management, Low Impact Development in Puget Sound*.

"I was very impressed by the large number of projects and local ordinances in Puget Sound that use low impact development techniques," said Bruce Wulkan, the Action Team's project lead for stormwater programs. "It's clear that low impact development has arrived in our region. The interest and enthusiasm tells us that local governments, developers and engineers are hungry for more effective ways to manage stormwater."

The book emphasizes a natural approach versus conventional development that involves clearing, grading and paving sites. In traditional development, engineers typically design and build stormwater facilities such as retention ponds to hold stormwater and remove pollutants.

"We now know that these conventional techniques haven't been entirely successful at their job of managing stormwater flow and removing pollutants, such as bacteria, to protect streams and habitat," said Wulkan.

The low impact development designs use the natural features of a piece of property and special management practices to manage stormwater in residential neighborhoods, retail centers and more. Low impact development projects include rain gardens which involve layering different types of gravel, soil and mulch; natural drainage systems that use native plants; sidewalks, patios and driveways with permeable pavements and other projects that filter oil, grease, dirt and other contaminants from stormwater runoff. Examples in the book include the following.

- The **city of Bellingham** transformed three parking stalls in its city hall lot into a rain garden. Previously rain and snow washed untreated contaminants off of the parking lot and into nearby Whatcom Creek. Now the \$4,500 rain garden collects and treats stormwater runoff before it flows into the Creek.
- Builders have installed sidewalks and parking lots in **Seattle, Olympia** and **other Puget Sound areas** using pervious concrete, a structural concrete without fine particles. The concrete looks like a giant rice cake and allows stormwater to pass through the top layer of concrete to a gravel layer underneath. The cost of pervious concrete runs \$6-\$9 per square foot, which is comparable to conventional concrete prices.

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For more information:

http://www.wa.gov/puget_sound/Publications/LID_studies/LID_approaches.htm