



Focus on **South Prairie Creek**

South Prairie Creek Watershed Cleanup Planning

The Problem

South Prairie Creek has some water quality problems. Concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria are exceeding state standards. That means that people in contact with the creek may be exposed to harmful bacteria and viruses. There is also a concern that temperatures are too high, which may harm fish.



Background

South Prairie Creek is located in the South Puget Sound region. It is a tributary to the Carbon River, which is part of the Puyallup River watershed. The watershed includes all or portions of the towns of Wilkeson, Buckley, South Prairie, and Burnett. Lower South Prairie Creek is the most important salmon spawning area in the Puyallup River basin with runs of fall Chinook, pink coho, chum, and winter steelhead. Lower South Prairie Creek failed to meet water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria, based on Ecology monitoring data from 1992-93. A segment of the creek was placed on the 303(d) list, the state's list of polluted waters. The creek also has temperature problems.

The purpose of the state's water cleanup planning process (called Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL) is to determine where fecal coliform bacteria is coming from and to determine how to help the creek meet water quality standards.

Current Situation

The Department of Ecology began its study of the creek in 2000. A copy of the monitoring plan can be found online at www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0103064.html. Ecology is publishing a technical report in March of 2003 (www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0303021.html) and needs public input to help it decide how to go about cleaning up the creek. Ecology will submit its cleanup plan strategy to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in June of 2003.

To Learn More

There will be a public meeting to receive comments on the plan:

- What: Puyallup River Watershed Council Meeting
- Where: Sumner City Hall (Council Chambers) 1104 Maple Street
- When: April 23, 2003. There will be a general business meeting at 5:00 p.m.
The South Prairie Creek plan will be presented at approximately 5:30 p.m.

You can obtain a copy of the draft plan at the public meeting or from Ecology's Southwest Regional Office; you can pick up a copy after April 6, 2003, at South Prairie Town Hall; or you can download a copy off the internet at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/watershed/index.html

Please send written comments by May 7, 2003, to: Cindy James, Department of Ecology, Water Quality Program, P.O. Box 47775, Olympia, WA 98504-7775 or email at cjam461@ecy.wa.gov.

Next Steps

- Your comments will be addressed in the plan.
- The plan will then be submitted to EPA for approval.
- Ecology will start developing the "Detailed Implementation Plan." This will list the specific tasks that need to be done to clean up South Prairie Creek and who will do them.
- Let Ecology know if you would like the opportunity to influence and contribute to the Detailed Implementation Plan, by sending your name, email, address, and phone number to Cindy James at the address above.

For more information, please contact:

Cindy James
Water Quality – Southwest Regional Office
Department of Ecology
Phone (360) 407-6295
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If you require this publication in an alternative format, please contact the Secretary at (360) 407-6270 (Voice) or (TTY) at 711 or 1-800-833-6388.