



Focus on Water Quality Cleanup Plan for Port Susan and Stillaguamish Watershed

from Ecology's Water Quality Program

**PUBLIC MEETINGS
& Open House
were held Nov. 9
at Arlington's
Pioneer Hall**

Ecology's Water Cleanup Process

Under the Clean Water Act, Ecology is required to prepare a Water Cleanup Plan, or Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), for water bodies that do not meet water quality standards.

Ecology conducts water quality monitoring to determine how bad the problem is and works with local and Tribal governments, watershed groups, and individuals to put together a plan to reduce the pollution.

The plan lists priority locations and strategies for cleanup activities.

Many areas have too much fecal coliform bacteria, too high temperatures, and not enough dissolved oxygen.

Fecal coliform bacteria

Water samples collected in Port Susan and at many places throughout the Stillaguamish River watershed have concentrations of **fecal coliform bacteria** that exceed state water quality standards. This means that shellfish cannot be harvested commercially from Port Susan and some reaches of the river may not be clean enough for swimming.

Dissolved oxygen

A second indicator of degraded water quality is the amount of **dissolved oxygen** in the water. At several locations in the watershed, during times of warm weather and late summer low flows, there is not enough dissolved oxygen for healthy stream life.

Temperature

A third cause for concern is "warm" water temperature throughout the watershed. Bathtub temperatures are great for swimming. However, during seasonally low streamflow in August and September, the water may be warm enough to stress or kill aquatic life, including salmonids, which require cold water with lots of dissolved oxygen. Tree removal and heavy sediment loads from upstream landslides and erosion, reduce the amount of high quality salmon spawning habitat and may contribute to stream temperature problems.

Clean up streams. What can you do?

Consider commenting on the Draft Water Cleanup Plan in writing before December 10, 2004. The plan contains many ideas about how you can help to reduce pollution reaching the river right now. Watershed businesses and residents can make a difference in water quality by eliminating pollutants that are washed into streams when it rains and by protecting and restoring healthy streamside conditions. Your Watershed Steward will welcome your help and may be able to assist you in your efforts.

Some ways you can help

- Properly maintain your septic tank.
- Pick up pet waste from yards and sidewalks.
- Keep livestock wastes out of streams.
- Keep fertilizers and pesticides from lawns, gardens, and farms from entering lakes and streams.
- Landscape without fertilizers and pesticides

- Reduce non-absorbing/impervious surfaces.
- Plant trees and perform other activities to help local streams.
- Eliminate sediment washed from construction sites and other unprotected ground.
- Wash cars on lawns and gravel driveways.
- Get involved in your local government's efforts to clean up the river.

Work with your neighbors, community association, or local citizen's group for water quality.

Federal law requires cleanup of polluted water

Ecology's Water Cleanup Plan is part of the federal process for determining how much pollutant a water body can accept (also called the Total Maximum Daily Load or TMDL process). The plan identifies potential fecal coliform pollution sources and the causes for low dissolved oxygen levels and high temperatures in the river. It also identifies what needs to be done so that these levels do not fail state standards.

The plan addresses both non-point sources of pollution (those related to land uses, such as failing septic systems and improperly managed animal wastes that contain bacteria) and point sources of pollution. Point sources are those conveyed directly by piped outfall to the stream and include industry, wastewater treatment plants, and stormwater outfalls. The plan outlines different strategies for non-point and point sources of pollution:

- Non-point sources are usually addressed through public outreach and education, local government land use controls and voluntary actions by landowners.
- Point sources are covered by state wastewater discharge permits. Ecology works directly with permit holders to determine what actions should be taken to address the pollution.

How can you stay involved?

Citizen involvement is essential to making the Stillaguamish Watershed a better place for people and fish and keeping it that way. Many local organizations are actively working to restore water quality, stay involved by participating in future watershed activities. For example:

- Get involved in the Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force for on-the-ground community fish habitat restoration and water pollution prevention activities. Contact volunteer coordinator Cara Ianni at 425-252-6686, info@stillysnofish.org or <http://www.stillysnofish.org>
- To get a no cost, no-risk environmental audit of streamside property, contact Stillaguamish Watershed Steward Jake Jacobson, 425-388-6428 or jake.jacobson@co.snohomish.wa.us
- Find out how to determine whether your septic system is functioning properly by contacting the Snohomish Health District at (425) 339-5250 which posts information about septic systems on their website: www.snohd.org/env_health2/www/waste.htm
- Learn how to reduce the impacts of your horses or livestock on local streams, while improving pasture productivity and reducing mud and weeds. Call the Snohomish Conservation District at (425) 335-5634, or email: dina@snohomishcd.org
- Let your local elected officials know that clean water is important to you.

Draft water cleanup plan for Stillaguamish watershed

To reduce fecal coliform pollution, improve dissolved oxygen levels, and reduce stream temperatures will take the coordinated efforts of the local agencies, Native-American tribes, businesses, and residents of the watershed. The draft plan to reduce pollution was developed by Ecology with help from all these groups. The plan is

available for local review and will be presented at the public meeting. To receive more information about the plan, see contact information below.

Where can you find Ecology's draft water cleanup action plan?

Copies of the draft water cleanup plan will be available at these locations:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Everett Public Library
2702 Hoyt Ave.
425-257-8020 | Arlington Library
135 N. Washington Ave.
360-435-3033 | Stanwood Library
9701 271 st St. NW
360-629-3132 |
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Library hours: Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.; Friday & Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Everett until 6 p.m.); Sunday, 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. (Stanwood not open Sunday)

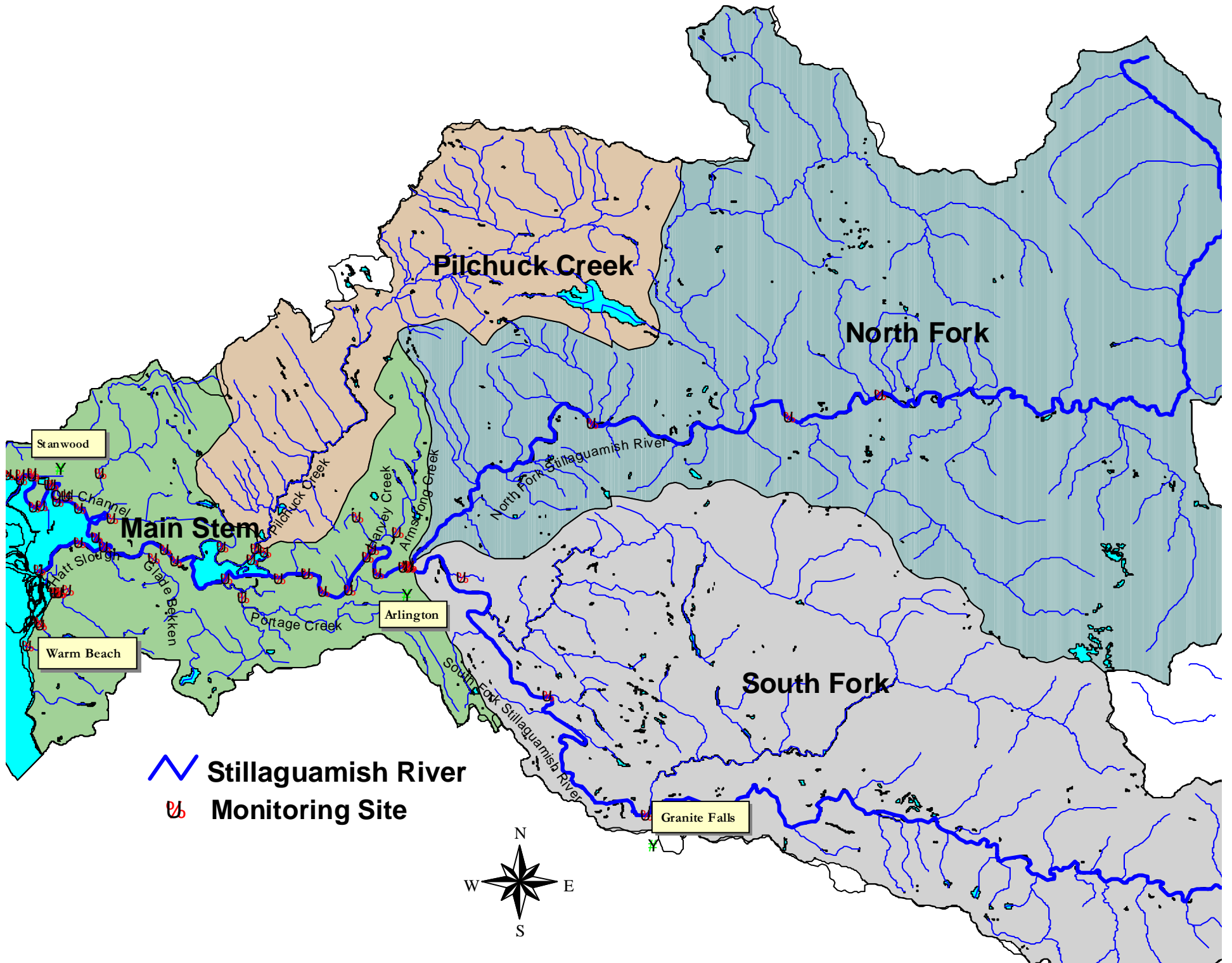
2. On the Internet: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/watershed/tmdl_info-nwro.html
3. At Ecology's Bellevue Office (address is below).
4. To obtain a copy by mail, to ask questions or get information, or to send written comments, please contact:

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Pilchuck Creek

North Fork

Main Stem

South Fork

Stanwood

Warm Beach

Arlington

Granite Falls

 **Stillaguamish River**
 **Monitoring Site**

