



# Focus on **Bacteria in Fautleroy Creek**

from Ecology's Water Quality Program

## Public Meeting



Ecology will host a public meeting on recent studies and plans to improve bacteria pollution in Fautleroy Creek:

**May 22, 2007**

**6:30 – 7:45 p.m.**

**Southwest Branch  
Public Library**

**9013 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW**

**West Seattle, 98126**

### **Contact Information**

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Everyone is invited to this meeting to learn about how state and local governments are approaching this problem and what you can do to keep informed or, possibly to be directly involved.

## What's the problem with bacteria in Fautleroy Creek?

The creek has too much fecal coliform bacteria. Measurements dating back to 1987 have shown continuing declines, but the creek still has bacteria levels beyond what Washington State allows in our freshwaters. We all need to work together to fix this.



Fecal coliform bacteria are a common water quality problem in our state. They belong to a mostly harmless group of bacteria

commonly found in large numbers in the feces of people and warm-blooded animals such as pets and wildlife. However, they indicate that more serious disease-causing organisms – called pathogens, may be present in water. Stormwater runoff and other discharges can carry these small organisms into Fautleroy Creek where they can infect humans through skin contact or ingestion of water.

## What is a Water Quality Improvement Report (TMDL)?

When these kinds of water quality problems are found, federal law requires that a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) be developed for water bodies that don't meet state water quality standards. The TMDL process includes an evaluation of the water quality conditions. This information is put into a document that also specifies how much the pollution needs to be reduced to achieve clean water and describes how the state plans to work with citizens, local governments, and organizations to control the pollution and improve conditions in the affected water body. This information is contained in the draft *Fautleroy Creek Water Quality Improvement Report* (Report).

Ecology has a longstanding interest in improving water quality in urban creeks such as Fautleroy Creek. After collecting surface water monitoring data for two recent years, Ecology initiated a TMDL for Fautleroy Creek. The City of Seattle and Fautleroy Watershed Council have been active partners in restoring Fautleroy Creek for years and are contributing to this TMDL effort.

Ecology requests your valuable input on the draft Report during the public comment period from May 11 through June 11, 2007. Ecology then intends to issue the final Report in June 2007. A detailed implementation plan will be developed by June 2008.

## Where is the pollution coming from?

Urban watersheds are very complex and contain many potential pollutants. This makes it hard for everyone to pinpoint all of the sources that contribute to the problems. In general, the most common potential bacteria sources in urban Puget Sound watersheds include:

- Domestic pets
- Human waste from leaking sanitary sewer lines or from sanitary sewer lines improperly connected to the stormwater drainage system.
- Wildlife, including birds such as gulls and crows, and mammals such as squirrels, rats, and raccoons.

Bacteria from these sources accumulate on yards, driveways, roadside ditches, roads, parking lots, and other locations. Then when it rains or snows, the resulting stormwater runoff can easily enter into the creek.

## What can you do?

“Fixing” fecal coliform contamination problems means each of us looking at what we do (or don’t do) on our property to prevent pet waste and other bacteria sources from reaching public waters. To be a good steward of your watershed, here are some important things you can do:



- Use proper waste management for dogs and cats. Bag pet waste and put it in the garbage.
- Don’t feed ducks and other waterfowl (their wastes contribute to bacteria problems).
- Protect or restore natural vegetation along streams and shorelines. Vegetation slows and filters pollutants from runoff and promotes natural wildlife balance.
- Prevent pollution in stormwater runoff – plant a rain garden, direct downspouts away from paved surfaces, keep storm drains clear of leaves.

### **Together we can improve water quality in Fautleroy Creek!**

For a copy of the draft Report (Publication No. 07-10-037): <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0710037.html>

Please consider reviewing the draft *Fautleroy Creek Water Quality Improvement Report*. If you have comments, by June 11, 2007 please write or call:

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