

# attention residents

## living in the esquimalt lagoon watershed



The Esquimalt Lagoon watershed is large - an estimated 1850 hectares - and includes the areas of land that drain into Colwood, Selleck and Bee creeks and those areas that drain directly into the lagoon. Much of the watershed is urbanized. When urban and residential development covers the land with buildings or other impervious surfaces, less water is able to soak into the soil. Instead, the water runs off into ditches and stormdrains, picking up urban pollutants as it makes its way through the watershed into the creeks and ultimately into Esquimalt Lagoon.

These pollutants are harmful to the marine plants and wildlife that make the lagoon their home; they also make the water unhealthy for swimming and the fish and shellfish unsafe for consumption. Please see inside for a map of the watershed and tips on how you can minimize polluted runoff from your property.

# stewardship begins with you! *Here are some simple things you can do to help reduce contaminant inputs to Esquimalt Lagoon*

As we live and work within the watershed, the choices we make in our daily activities affect the Esquimalt Lagoon and its watershed. Actions you take to minimize polluted runoff from your property and within your neighbourhood will contribute to the health of the entire watershed and help keep it a wonderful place to live.

## Don't let contaminants get into stormwater...

- Check and repair automobile fluid leaks.
- Purchase environmentally friendly, biodegradable alternatives to toxic chemicals and pesticides and use them sparingly. Where possible, avoid using chemical fertilizers; use compost instead.
- Maintain a healthy buffer strip of native vegetation along watercourses and shorelines. A buffer will serve as a filter, slowing runoff and capturing particles and pollutants before they enter the aquatic environment. As an added benefit, native vegetation will attract a variety of wildlife and their roots will stabilize the soil.
- Keep animals and livestock out of and away from stormwater flows.
- Regularly monitor and maintain on-site septic tanks and fields.
- Report spills on land or in water to the Provincial Emergency Program (1-800-663-3456).

## Conserve water and keep it out of the gutter...

- Wash your car on a lawn or gravel area, or take it to a car wash that recycles its water. Try to use mild, phosphate-free soaps.
- Sweep sidewalks and driveways instead of hosing them off.
- Dechlorinate hot tub and swimming pool water, then discharge slowly to your lawn. Be sure not to drain the water near a septic drainfield.
- Pave as little of your property as possible. Try to use gravel and paving stones or plant drought-tolerant trees, shrubs and grass. This will help to slow stormwater runoff and reduce erosion.
- Don't overwater your lawn or garden.



*Wetlands are important to retain - they help filter oils and grease, harmful chemicals and other contaminants from runoff water before they reach the lagoon*

## Maintain natural areas to attract wildlife...

- Keep your property well vegetated with native plants and trees. Where possible, leave natural areas for wildlife.
- Remove invasive weeds such as broom, purple loosestrife, daphne and Himalayan blackberry and replace with native vegetation.
- If you live along a watercourse or shoreline, consult an expert to help 'soften' your shoreline and create prime fish and bird habitat. Leave streamside vegetation and fallen trees as wildlife habitat.
- Where possible, share access to watercourses with neighbours to limit structures and walkways in sensitive areas.



*Naturally vegetated shorelines provide better habitat for wildlife than manicured lawns - they are less maintenance too!*

## Put waste where it belongs...

- Ensure all household, yard and garden chemicals and cleaners are disposed of at a safe, environmentally appropriate location.
- Recycle used oil, solvents and paints at local collection centres.
- Put fully extinguished cigarette butts and other litter in the garbage.
- Use drop cloths when painting to collect paint chips and drips.
- Collect pet waste and flush it down the toilet.

*Chemicals and contaminants that enter the lagoon may be harmful to marine organisms*



SEE  
MAP  
ON  
OTHER  
SIDE!  
Showing the  
Esquimalt Lagoon  
watershed



## esquimalt lagoon stewardship initiative

The Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative (ELSI) is a coalition of community and environmental groups, government agencies and First Nations working together to protect, enhance and restore the health of Esquimalt Lagoon for present and future generations of people, plants and animals.



For more information on how to reduce the impact from your property, protect this area, or the initiative, please contact:

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## What is a watershed?

A watershed is a catchment area that drains surface and groundwater to a common waterway such as a creek, lake, wetland, estuary or ocean. In a developed watershed, much of the land is covered with buildings, concrete, asphalt and other impervious surfaces that block water from soaking into the soil. When this happens, the water stays on the surface and runs off into ditches and stormdrains, where it is quickly transported to nearby watercourses.

Runoff water collects a nasty assortment of pollutants on its way through a watershed: oils and grease from roads and driveways, chemicals from gardens and lawns, sewage from malfunctioning septic systems, litter and anything else that will float or dissolve. This polluted water then flows from the land into creeks, lakes, wetlands or the ocean and can harm aquatic plants and animals.





# Esquimalt Lagoon Watershed

You have received this map because your house is located in the Esquimalt Lagoon Watershed, which drains approximately 1850 ha of land to the Esquimalt Lagoon. The major water features within this watershed include Glen Lake, Colwood, Selleck and Bee creeks and Esquimalt Lagoon. The lagoon, which is a federally designated Migratory Bird Sanctuary, is home to a wide variety of wildlife species and is an important resting and feeding area for migrating birds. The lagoon has about 15 ha of eelgrass habitat and supports populations of sea-run Cutthroat trout, Coho and Chinook salmon and mussels and clams. The older growth and riparian forests, wetlands and fringe marshes surrounding the lagoon also provide diverse habitats for a variety of wildlife.

Everything that occurs within this watershed has the potential to affect the health of the lagoon and its inhabitants. Individual property owners can do many things that will contribute positively to the health of Esquimalt Lagoon and help keep this watershed a wonderful place to live. The Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative (ELSI) is working to improve the health of the lagoon and provide information to residents in the area. Please see the back of this map for more information on the watershed and how you can help.



Rivers and Streams

Galloping Goose Regional Trail

Municipal Boundaries

Drainage into Esquimalt Lagoon

Individual Watershed Boundaries

Esquimalt Lagoon Migratory Bird Sanctuary

Veterans Memorial Parkway

Stormwater Discharges

Direction of Stream Flow

**Sensitive Ecosystems**

Coastal Bluffs

Terrestrial Herbaceous

Older Forest

Riparian

Older Second Growth Forest

Woodland

Wetland

Mixed Sensitive Ecosystems

Garry Oak Ecosystems

This map was created in September 2002. The air photo used was taken in 1999. Linework used on this map comes from various sources. Contact CRD Environmental Services for details. Information contained on this map can also be found on the CRD Natural Areas Atlas, available online at [www.naturalareasatlas.ca](http://www.naturalareasatlas.ca).

0 125 250 500 750 1000 Meters

Coordinate System: Universal Transverse Mercator - Zone 10 North  
North American Datum 1983