

Keeping Polluted Waters Out of Puget Sound Voter Attitudes Toward Run-off Management

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The Russell Family Foundation
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Objective of public opinion research:

What thoughts, knowledge do people have in common about the stormwater problem?

What's our base?

Puget Sound voters are different

Have a high level of awareness about water pollution issues

Know the term “impervious”

Have broad understanding of terms like rain gardens

They know that when it rains, the roads get slick with oil.

Who is responsible for keeping the water clean?

The government!

People oppose government, they don't oppose clean water.

People have pride in
environmental protection.

Our waters are in fair shape, but
not Puget Sound.

Things are better than they used
to be.

People don't think of what's happening on the land as influencing water quality.

People still don't know what a watershed is.

Stormwater vs. polluted runoff

Using “polluted runoff” puts the land back into the story.

New information that resonated with people:

Most of the pollution entering local rivers and streams and Puget Sound does not come from industry, or from anyone dumping pollution into the water. It comes from the streets and parking lots and highways, from our towns and our cities, and is carried into the waterways by rain running off the ground into the water.

Filtering water is a neutral term that people understand.

Permeable concrete is perceived as something “cool” and positive.

Green infrastructure is a term people liked, once it was set up properly. They like something that mimics nature.

No love for LID

People did not respond well to the term low-impact development.

Many loved the idea of natural filters. The story that plants and trees mimic natural processes to remove pollutants using the ground as a filter.

We got some splainin' to do

People don't understand where the pollution goes.

Quantify the benefits

This action will keep XXX much pollution out of the water.

What really happens with our actions?

Make it a shared interest.

Successful words example:

Seattle's Natural Drainage Systems

People relate best to solution messages,
not problem messages.

Problems can feel hopeless.

People related best to shared values.
What evokes values?

- Pride and stewardship
- Innovation and technology
- Financial prudence
- Health of Puget Sound

Read the entire 14 page document here:

[http://teams/sites/WQ/pmt/2011 PMT
CC/default.aspx](http://teams/sites/WQ/pmt/2011_PMT_CC/default.aspx)

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