

# Your Impact on Salmon/Fish A Self-Assessment



Washington  
Department of  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**

How do your personal actions, *at home, at work or anywhere in your community*, affect salmon and your quality of life?

## *Your Impact on Salmon/Fish A Self-Assessment*

### *Protecting Salmon/Fish by your choices.*

Every household and property owner is responsible for our land and water. Consider how you manage your home and property to make it a healthy living space for you and your family; a valuable asset; and a place which protects your fish and wildlife legacy.

### *Your Goal:*

Your goal is to protect your land and quality of life while helping salmon. This assessment guides your choices to achieve this goal.

### *Why should you be concerned?*

Salmon and other fish are in decline in the Northwest. We must act now to save salmon and protect our lifestyle. Salmon are one link in a complex food chain and depend on a healthy environment to maintain their populations. If salmon disappear, so will other species, and our quality of life will change. The decline of salmon is a warning to us to act now to maintain and restore the natural environment which sustains us.

### *What can you do?*

This assessment has been designed to make you aware of your practices that increase the risk of hurting salmon and degrading our quality of life.

Take action now by completing the "Action Plan" worksheet located at the end of this booklet.

*"It isn't just our salmon that are in trouble—  
it's our Northwest quality of life that is in trouble.  
We're all connected by our land and water.  
When rivers flood and our lakes are polluted,  
people and fish are hurt."*

—Governor Locke, February 1998

## Assessing Your Impact on Salmon/Fish

How do your personal actions, *at home, at work or anywhere in your community*, affect salmon and your quality of life?



Use this guide to look at the effects your lifestyle has on salmon and other fish. Check what best describes your actions in each category.



Enter the number of checks for each risk factor.

- Saver  
(low risk to salmon)
- Friend  
(moderate risk to salmon)
- Threat  
(high risk to salmon)

Example: # of  
Activities Checked

- 3 Saver
- 2 Friend
- 1 Threat



Fill in the planning chart on page 18 with your identified high risk activities which can degrade salmon.

Example:  1 Threat     Drive to work alone



Develop a plan to reduce your high risk activities.

Example: Action possible: Take bus or carpool

### Definitions:

A Salmon Saver Activity is one that helps salmon and protects our quality of life.

A Salmon Friendly Activity is one that has a neutral effect on salmon and quality of life.

A Salmon Threatening Activity is one that harms salmon and degrades quality of life.

Note: If you have checked activities which harm salmon, you can learn how to do things differently through the "Get Help" groups listed.

## Salmon Saver Rating Chart

### Household Water Use

Get help from:

- ◆ Cooperative Extension
- ◆ Public Utility Districts
- ◆ City Water Utilities

### Garden/Lawn Water Use

Get help from:

- ◆ Conservation District
- ◆ Cooperative Extension

### Landscaping

Get help from:

- ◆ WDFW Backyard Sanctuary Publications
- ◆ Cooperative Extension
- ◆ Local plant nurseries
- ◆ Conservation Districts often have an annual native plant sale at wholesale prices.
- ◆ City water utilities
- ◆ County Environmental Departments

See pg. 17 for information on native plants.

## As a Salmon Saver You

*A basic need  
of fish  
is water.*

*The more water  
you take from  
streams and  
groundwater,  
the less is  
available for  
fish passage  
and habitat.*

- Look at household water use to find ways to use less. Ideally use less than 20 gallons of water per day per person.
- Install low flow toilets and *save up to 34,000 gallons of water per year.*
- Install low flow shower-heads *and reduce water use by 70%.*

- Minimize water use on gardens. Reduce lawn watering during summer. Use drip irrigation in garden.
- Maintain an organic lawn or reduce the size of your lawn.
- Grow native plants that use less water.

*Mow it high  
and let it lie.*

*Lawns do not  
absorb rain well.*

*Native plants  
absorb rain,  
reducing the  
amount  
of runoff*

- Keep surface areas natural where possible: poke holes in ground to increase water absorption.
- Maximize use of native plants in landscaping and reduce lawn size. Enjoy the benefits of native plants which attract wildlife, do not need fertilizers or pesticides, are drought resistant and need little maintenance.
- Make sure rainwater drains to yard, not street or septic drain field.
- Use efficient watering system; don't over-water.

*As a Salmon  
Friend You*

*As a Salmon  
Threat You*

*Your Impact  
# Activities Checked*

- Use as little household water for washing, cleaning, flushing, etc. as possible.
- Limit bath and shower time.
- Reduce toilet flush volume by installing a displacement device and save up to 12,000 gallons of water per year.

- Do not take into account household water use.
- Use more than 60 gallons per person per day.
- Take long showers at full blast

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

- Minimize water use on gardens and lawns.
- Water lawn and plants early morning and evening when more water is absorbed.
- Turn off water at first sign the ground is saturated to allow time for water to be absorbed.

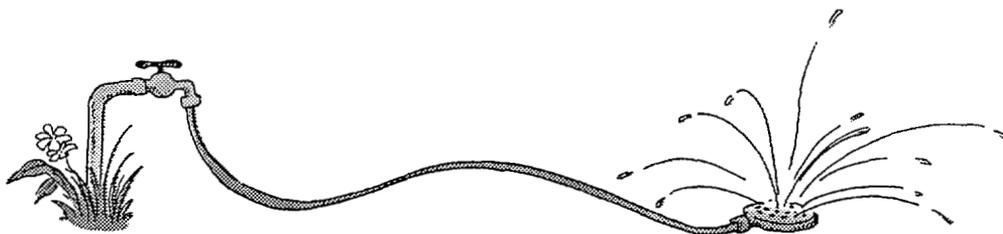
- Use more water than necessary on your garden.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

- Use some native plants in landscaping.
- Use mulching lawn mower.
- Set lawnmower to 2-3" height to get deeper healthier grass roots which retain moisture.

- Remove native plant species and plant lawns.
- Apply lots of water to landscape plants.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat



## Salmon Saver Rating Chart

## As a Salmon Saver You

### Electricity Consumption

#### Get help from:

- ◆ Local utilities can survey your energy use and make suggestions to reduce it.
- ◆ Local non-profit groups e.g. Energy Outreach Center
- ◆ Energy Extension at Cooperation Extension

*In the Northwest electricity is largely generated through hydroelectric dams. Some dams block fish passage.*

*Using less electricity reduces the need for dam-generated power, and leaves more water to carry young salmon to sea*

*Turn lights off and help save a salmon.*

- Survey household electrical use and follow family plan to reduce.
- Schedule electrical use for non-peak periods.

### Pesticides and Weed Killers

#### Get help from:

- ◆ Cooperative Extension
- ◆ Conservation District
- ◆ The Toxics Coalition
- ◆ Local weed board
- ◆ 1-800-RECYCLE (to find out how to dispose)

#### Reduce your use

**Fact:** The cumulative effects of household use are 70 times more than agricultural use.

*These are hazardous wastes that can poison fish, wildlife and vegetation, and eventually affect human health.*

- Use Integrated Pest Management. (Get help from cooperative extension or conservation district.)
- Be happy with less-than-perfect plant specimens and lawn.

#### Use:

- Avoid use of weed killers. Pull weeds by hand.
- Use natural substitutes

#### Storage:

- Store chemicals where there's no chance for them to pollute surface or ground water.
- Store chemicals in original containers which are sealed and covered.

#### Disposal:

- Dispose of chemicals at designated hazardous waste sites.

*As a Salmon  
Friend You*

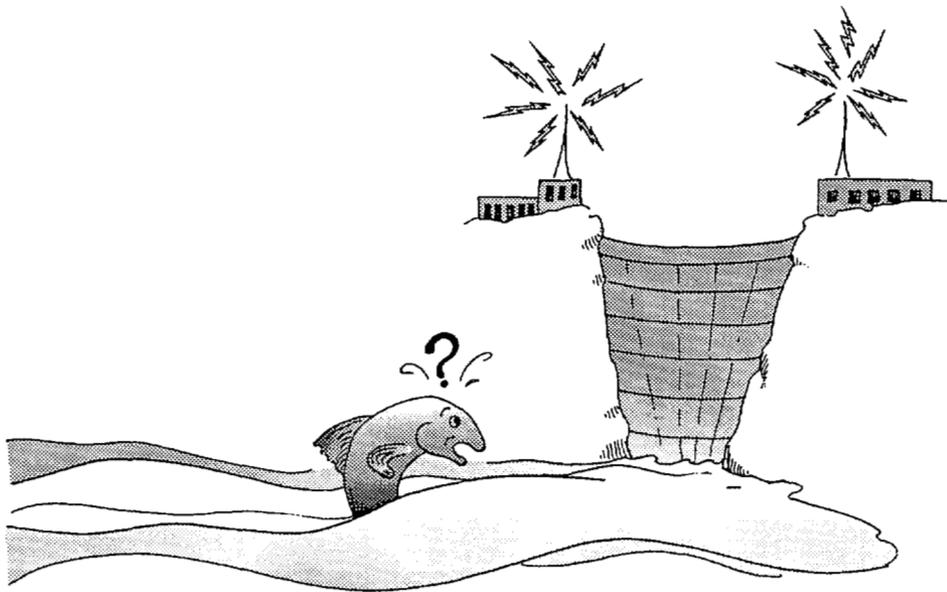
*As a Salmon  
Threat You*

*Your Impact  
# Activities Checked*

- Minimize electricity use.
- Buy energy efficient electrical appliances.

- Make no effort to reduce electricity use.
- Leave lights on in unoccupied rooms.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat



*Use:*

- Seldom use pesticides and weed killers.
- Follow label instructions carefully.
- Use pest-resistant plants in landscaping.

*Use:*

- Do not follow chemical application guidelines.
- Use weed killers to control weeds.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

*Storage and Disposal:*

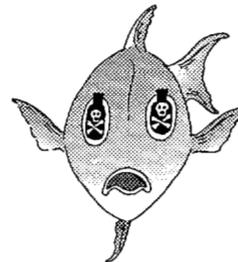
- Never put left-over chemicals down drain.

*Storage and Disposal:*

- Do not follow storage and disposal guidelines.

*Integrated Pest Management Hints:*

- ◆ Monitor pest populations and use pesticides as a last resort after first trying all other methods.
- ◆ Plant pest resistant varieties.
- ◆ Maintain healthy plants and full ground cover to minimize pests and weeds.



## Salmon Saver Rating Chart

## As a Salmon Saver You

### Fertilizers

#### Get help from:

- ◆ Cooperative Extension
- ◆ Conservation District

#### Natural Use

*Fertilizers reduce good fish habitat by promoting excessive growth of aquatic plants that deplete oxygen for fish.*

- Use home compost on garden, instead of commercial fertilizers.
- Keep use of nitrogen fertilizers to a bare minimum.
- Test soil to make sure you use appropriate fertilizer.
- Use slow release natural fertilizers.

### Phosphates in Detergents

- ◆ Hint: Usually liquid detergents contain less phosphate than powders.
- ◆ Hint: Electric dishwashing detergent often contains high phosphorus.

#### Reduce your use

*Phosphates reduce good fish habitat by promoting excessive growth of aquatic plants that deplete oxygen for fish.*

- Use only low phosphate detergents for all household purposes.
- Provide suggestions to grocery stores to stock low phosphate detergents.

### Septic Systems

#### Get help from:

- ◆ City and County Health Department on septic system maintenance

*In septic drainfields that fail the waste products percolate through the soil into the ground water, reaching streams & wetlands with pollution that depletes oxygen needed by fish.*

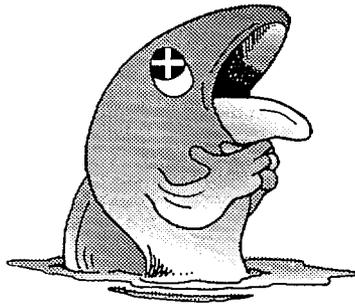
- Pump septic tank every 2-3 years.
- Inspect annually when indicated, and avoid flushing non-biodegradable items and toxics. Avoid "drowning" the system with too much water at once.
- Prevent compacting soil over drainfield by vehicles and large animals.
- Don't use garbage disposal—or you don't have one.
- Don't use chemical additives that are sold to improve septic function.

*As a Salmon  
Friend You*

*As a Salmon  
Threat You*

*Your Impact  
# Activities Completed*

- Seldom use fertilizers.
- Follow label instructions carefully.

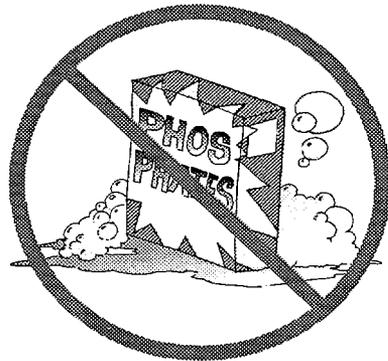


- Pay little attention to fertilizer application guidelines.
- Use petroleum-based fertilizers.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

- Look for detergents labeled low phosphate at local grocery store and buy when available.

- Disregard phosphate content of detergents.



- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

- Pump every 3-5 years.
- Inspect every few years.
- Use garbage disposal on a limited basis.
- Keep deep rooted plants off septic drainfield.

- Unsure when (or if) last pumping occurred or where drainfield is located.
- Use garbage disposal regularly.
- Pour hazardous chemicals down household drains.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

## Salmon Saver Rating Chart

## As a Salmon Saver You

### Storm Drains

#### Get help from:

- ◆ City & County Stormwater Department
- ◆ Cooperative Extension

### Reduce Runoff from Property.

#### Get help from:

- ◆ Conservation Districts
- ◆ Cooperative Extension
- ◆ Stormwater/surface water authority



*Runoff from urban/suburban property mainly goes to storm drains.*

*Most storm drains go directly to streams, wetlands & lakes - the wastes and runoff water entering the drain do not go to the sewage treatment plant.*

*These hazardous wastes poison fish, wildlife and their habitat.*

- Never dump waste materials in storm drains – especially oils, paints, antifreeze, or household chemicals of any kind.
- Take hazardous waste to local hazardous waste disposal facility.

- Drain rainwater from roof to yard where it is absorbed and kept off street or drainfield.
- Sweep driveways and sidewalks with a broom, not the hose.
- Maintain your neighborhood stormwater pond (in newer housing developments).

### Cars/Trucks

#### Get help from:

- ◆ Regional Transit Authorities
- ◆ State Department of Transportation
- ◆ Stormwater/surface water authority



*Washing driveways & sidewalks sends car-generated pollutants into the stormwater drains which go directly to streams and wetlands and poison fish.*

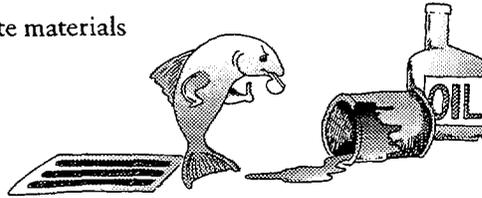
- Wash car on lawn; so water won't drain to street or storm drains. Or go to a commercial car wash where waste water is recycled.
- Check for oil & radiator leaks often and repair them at once.
- Use mass transit, car pools, walking or bicycling as often as possible.
- Use telecommuting when possible.

*As a Salmon  
Friend You*

*As a Salmon  
Threat You*

*Your Impact  
+ Activities Checked*

- Prevent, where possible, waste materials from reaching storm drains.



- Dispose of oil, paint and household waste down storm drains.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

- Minimize paved area on property.
- Limit size of your driveway and patio to no bigger than necessary.



- Cover property with lawn or leaves bare soil.
- Remove native vegetation.
- Maintain wide concrete or asphalt driveway.
- Spray and wash away driveway and sidewalk debris.
- Put in a tennis court and extra paved parking for RV's, boats, and guests.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

- Have mechanic check for oil & radiator leaks when car is serviced.
- Car pool or use mass transit sometimes. Or drive fuel-efficient car.
- Keep your vehicle(s) tuned for maximum efficiency.

- Wash vehicle in driveway or on street.
- Do not check vehicle for leaks.
- Drive to work alone.
- Drive a gas guzzler.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

## Salmon Saver Rating Chart

## As a Salmon Saver You

### Living Near Water

Get help from:

- ◆ Conservation Districts
- ◆ WDFW
- ◆ Watershed Councils
- ◆ Cooperative Extension
- ◆ DOE

*Waterfront owners  
have the greatest  
opportunity as  
stewards to manage  
their property for  
salmon survival.*



*Wetlands and  
estuaries are the  
nurseries that keep  
young salmon safe*

- Maintain native streamside vegetation –the riparian zone– as habitat for fish and wildlife, to filter pollutants and minimize erosion.
- Replant with native plants if streamside plants have been removed –as wide a buffer as possible.
- Use natural ground cover or porous materials such as gravel or bark instead of asphalt and concrete for paths and drivesways.
- Ensure roof runoff soaks into the ground. Avoid piping to ravines or streams as it causes erosion.
- Minimize steep slope and bank erosion by leaving trees and shrubs.

### Managing Large Animals

Get help from:

- ◆ Cooperative Extension
- ◆ Conservation District
- ◆ City and County Utilities

*Waste from  
livestock and pets is  
a major source of  
water pollution,  
degrading water  
quality and the  
supporting habitat  
for fish.*

- Fence livestock away from stream, wetlands or lakes.
- Consult local government recommendations on Best Management Practices to handle animal waste.
- Use best management practices for pastures and livestock facilities to minimize erosion and runoff

### Managing Small Animals

Get help from:

- ◆ Cooperative Extension have suggestions for pet waste disposal.
- ◆ City & county Environmental Health



- Scoop up all pet feces and flush down toilet.

*As a Salmon Friend You*

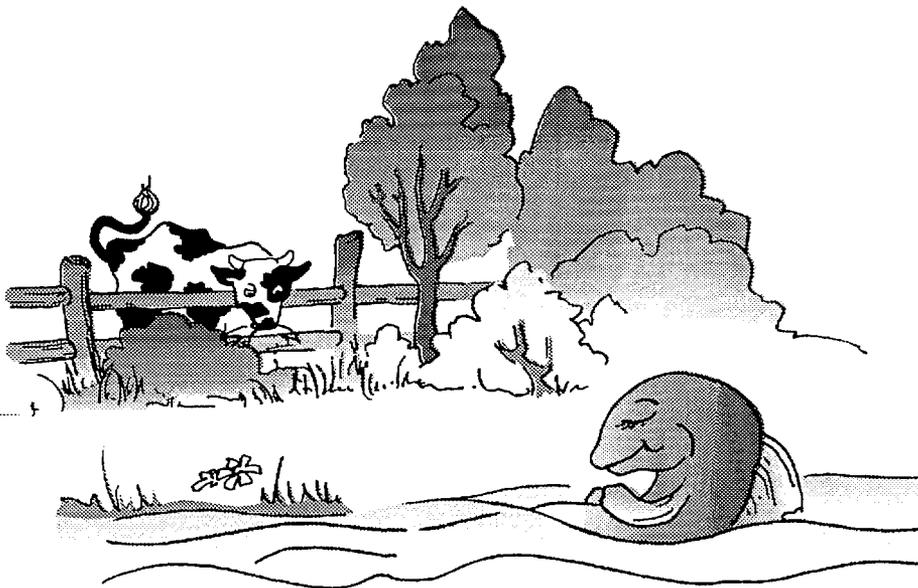
*As a Salmon Threat You*

*Your Impact*  
# Activities Checked

- Maintain native vegetation at stream side.
- Check often for signs of erosion and pollution -follow up with remedies if possible.
- Keep lawn and grass clippings off waterway banks and buffers. Use curbside pickup or compost clippings away from streams and ravines.

- Landscape right up to the stream side, wetland or lake shore.
- Remove native plants along shore line.
- Pave paths leading to and around streams, wetlands and lake sides.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

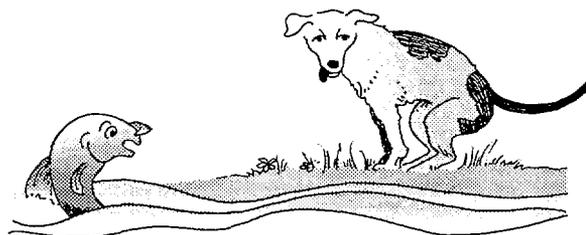


- Minimize animal access to streams.
- Allow livestock to stand in stream.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat

- Clean up pet feces on sidewalks, driveways and other impervious areas and throw in unused part of yard.
- Leave pet feces where deposited.

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat



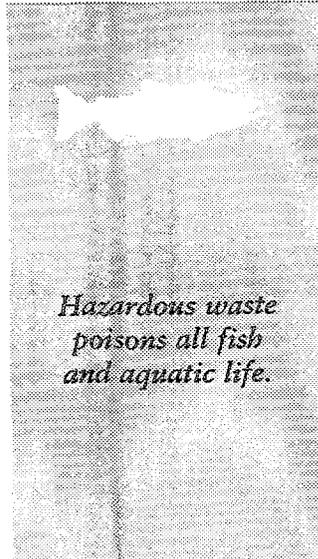
## Salmon Saver Rating Chart

## As a Salmon Saver You

### Hazardous Waste

#### Get help from:

- ◆ All Department of Ecology regions have a 24 hour response line.  
Central WA, Yakima:  
(509) 575-2490  
Eastern WA, Spokane:  
(509) 456-2926  
Northwest WA, Bellevue:  
(425) 649-7000  
Southwest WA, Lacey:  
(360) 407-6300

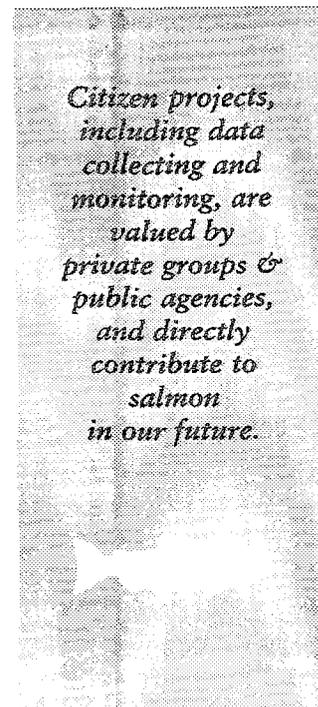


- Keep a close watch for evidence of oil and other contamination in waterways, and report such occurrences to authorities.

### Becoming a Salmon Steward

#### Get help from

- ◆ WDFW publication: "NatureMapping for Fish and Streams" and "Restoring the Watershed."
- ◆ Conservation Districts
- ◆ Watershed Councils
- ◆ Local Stream Team
- ◆ Adopt-A-Stream
- ◆ Cooperative Extension Volunteer Programs, 4H, Master Watershed Stewards



- Take stewardship classes and volunteer on stewardship projects.
- Assess the health of streams, wetlands or lakes.
- Report data.
- Volunteer in the community to do projects that help salmon such as:
  - Riparian area planting
  - Water and habitat monitoring
  - Aquatic insect surveys
  - Giving presentations to schools and adults on how they can make a difference.
  - Helping with stream, wetland or lake enhancement projects
  - Instream restoration with permits and technical expertise creating habitat in streams for fish using logs and gravel

#### ◆ Websites:

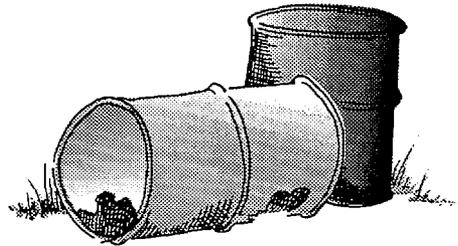
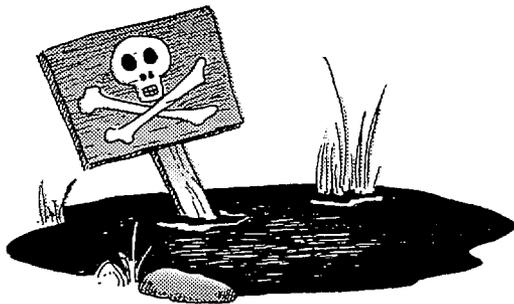
<http://salmo.cqs.washington.edu/~wagap/nm> (Nature Mapping)  
<http://www.wa.gov/ecology/wa/wow> (Watch Over Washington)

*As a Salmon  
Friend You*

*As a Salmon  
Threat You*

*Your Impact  
# Activities Checked*

Report spills.



Saver  
 Friend  
 Threat

Ignore neighbor pouring oil or chemicals into streams.

Ignore evidence of spill, expecting someone else to report.

Seek assistance to assess the health of local watershed for salmon.

Know where the streams are located and what fish use them. Periodically walk the stream to check on water level and the presence of fish, and to look for anything unusual.

Know where water from property drains.

Watch for environmental changes in your community.

Minimize your impact outdoors when recreating. Do not ride through streams on bikes. Stay on trails and do not trample streamside plants.

Avoid vehicle travel off road and on muddy roads.

Believe salmon/fish are someone else's problem.

Are unaware of local streams; their location, or the fish that use them.

Do not know where water drains from property.

Do not know what a watershed is.

Saver  
 Friend  
 Threat

## Salmon Saver Rating Chart

## As a Salmon Saver You

### Volunteering

#### Get help from

- ◆ WDFW publication on “Restoring the Watershed”
- ◆ Watershed councils
- ◆ Salmon Enhancement Groups
- ◆ Sportsman groups
- ◆ Cooperative Extension Volunteer Programs (see website)
- ◆ Adopt-A-Stream Foundation
- ◆ Local Stream Teams
- ◆ Save Our Stream & other organizations
- ◆ Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups
- ◆ WDFW Website <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw>
- ◆ Conservation Districts “Earth Team,” etc.

*Saving  
salmon/fish  
begins  
with you.*

*Your personal  
actions will make  
a measurable  
difference.*

- Assess community practices according to these guidelines.
- Educate your community by offering training on what to do.
- Get out on the streams and restore the habitat.
- Regularly contribute volunteer hours to a project that improves the environment.
- Participate in the running of a volunteer organization.

### Getting Involved

#### Get help from:

- ◆ Department of Community Trade and Economic Development
- ◆ Check local city and county growth management plans for ordinances which affect salmon.

*Local county  
commissions and  
city councils are  
deciding the future  
of fish, wildlife and  
salmon recovery  
through growth  
management  
plans.*

*Your input counts.*

- Check local growth management plans for policies that reflect good practices.
- Seek changes in plans to make streams safe for fish.
- Keep neighborhood associations informed on watershed health & neighborhood practices that could improve it.

*As a Salmon  
Friend You*

*As a Salmon  
Threat You*

*Your Impact  
# Activities Checked*

- Hope to find more time to volunteer for local groups saving the salmon.
- Contribute a few volunteer hours or money to a project that improves the environment.

*No Action is  
An Action!*

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat



- Read the growth management plans and support local officials in developing policy which positively affects the environment.
- Participate in a neighborhood association.

*No Action is  
An Action!*

- Saver
- Friend
- Threat



## *Beneficial Plants*

*Native and other plants recommended for your property  
that enhance salmon and wildlife habitat:*

### *Western Washington*

#### *Trees:*

Sitka spruce  
Red Alder  
Black Hawthorn  
Oregon Ash  
Black cottonwood  
Western hemlock  
Douglas fir  
Western Red Cedar  
Grand Fir  
Aspen  
River Birch

#### *Shrubs:*

Serviceberry  
Red-osier dogwood  
Ninebark  
Snowberry  
Tall Oregon-grape  
Oceanspray  
Red-flowering current  
Evergreen huckleberry  
Salmonberry  
Hazelnut  
Vine Maple  
Nootka Rose  
Hardhack  
Black twinberry  
Red Elderberry

### *Eastern Washington*

#### *Trees:*

Ponderosa pine  
Douglas fir  
Englemann Spruce  
Black Cottonwood  
Western Red Cedar  
Quaking Aspen  
Oregon White Oak

#### *Shrubs:*

Douglas hawthorne  
Serviceberry  
Woods rose  
Chokecherry  
Golden currant  
Elderberry  
Willow  
Red-osier dogwood  
Snowberry  
Rabbitbush  
Mock Orange  
Bitterbrush

#### *Grass cover:*

Upland grass mix for Eastern WA.  
Blue fescue  
Great Basin wild rye  
Idaho fescue

*For information on tree and shrub species and planting guidelines:  
Contact the Community Forestry Program: 1-800-523-TREE,  
or Washington Dept. of Natural Resource Urban,  
and WDFW Urban Wildlife Program 425-775-1311 Ext. 110*



## Central Contact Numbers

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)  
360- 902-2200

Website: <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw>

Department of Ecology  
360-407-6000

Department of Transportation (DOT)  
360-705-7000

For an Environmental Emergency call Ecology 24-hour Emergency Spill Response Line: 360-407-6300

For information on Growth Management Planning in your area call: 360-753-2222

To Find a Conservation District in Your Area call:  
Conservation Commission: 360-407-6200  
Website: <http://www.conserver.org/wcc.html>

To Find a Cooperative Extension Office in Your Area call:  
Washington State University: 509-335-2811  
Website: <http://ext.wsu.edu> - Link to CSANR and Master Gardeners

For Information on Disposal of Pesticides, Herbicides and other Hazardous Wastes call:  
Ecology Hazardous Waste Hotline: 1-800-RECYCLE

For Landscape Information call:  
Washington Native Plant Society: 1-888-288-8022

For Information on local City and County Sewer and Water Districts call:  
253-872-4063

For Information on Public Utility Districts in your area call:  
Washington PUD Association: 206-682-3110

Washington Toxics Coalition:  
1-800-844-SAFE

Washington Dept. of Natural Resources Forest Stewardship Program  
(Technical and Financial assistance to forest owners for forestry, fish and wildlife practices): 1-800-527-3305.  
Website: <http://www.wa.gov/dnr>. E-mail: [forest\\_stewardship@wadnr.gov](mailto:forest_stewardship@wadnr.gov)

*Many individuals from the above groups were involved in the development and review of this document.  
Written and Produced by Washington Project WILD Programs at WDFW*

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This publication is available in alternative formats upon request  
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