

City of Sumner

TMDL Summary 2016

The Puyallup River is part of the Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 10, has several tributaries and drains an area of approximately 1,065 square miles. The Puyallup River and several of its tributaries were confirmed to have Fecal Coliform levels exceeding Washington State water quality standards for fresh water streams. In an effort to remedy the situation, the Washington State Department of Ecology developed a Water Quality Improvement Report with actions necessary to improve water quality throughout the Puyallup River Watershed. The Puyallup River Watershed TMDL for Fecal Coliform was formally issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in September 2011.

The following summarizes the activities and projects the City of Sumner has undertaken to reduce impacts of Fecal Coliform to Salmon Creek.

Since the introduction of this TMDL, the City of Sumner has researched and investigated potential causes for Fecal Coliform including failing septic systems and livestock access to Salmon Creek.

The City of Sumner conducted Fecal Coliform testing along Salmon Creek in 2011 to determine “hot spot” areas to focus efforts of Fecal Coliform reduction. Based on the results of this testing, the City of Sumner determined a potential septic area of concern.

In order to alleviate potential Fecal Coliform issues, the City designed and implemented a utility project to install a new sewer line for a residential area along the Creek where likely septic problems occur.

The City of Sumner is working with the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department to identify septic areas of concern and verify septic failures. So far, since 2013, 12 homes have abandoned their septic systems and converted to sewer (Up from 6 in 2015). Another home which had been identified as having a failed septic is in under order from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department to connect to sewer.

A secondary project with dual purpose involved the purchase of land along a 480-foot section of Salmon Creek. This land was previously utilized for livestock, where livestock had direct access to the creek. The City has purchased this land with the intent of creating wetland mitigation, thereby reducing the amount of livestock feces introduced to creek waters and increasing the vegetative buffer between Salmon Creek and the nearest development. This project is under contract and will be completed summer 2017.

As the City continues to make progress with each of these projects and other investigations, the City of Sumner will continue to conduct periodic testing for Fecal Coliform within Salmon Creek to verify effectiveness of these projects and determine if another potential source is present.