City of Sumner

TMDL Summary Update 2017

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 within the approximate 1.4 square mile drainage area in the city. 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 which installed 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, 15 homes have abandoned there septic systems and converted to sewer (3 of those occurred in 2017). 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. Enforcement on this property has been ongoing and the water service disconnected. Fecal from this area was reduced 99.5%.

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 and recently completed 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 was completed in 2017 and is undergoing ongoing monitoring.

Education and outreach for homeowners is aimed to help them connect to sewer and properly manage their septic systems to increase effectiveness, reducing fecal coliform within Salmon Creek. Educational material is created in-house with additional materials coming from EPA’s septic smart program.

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.