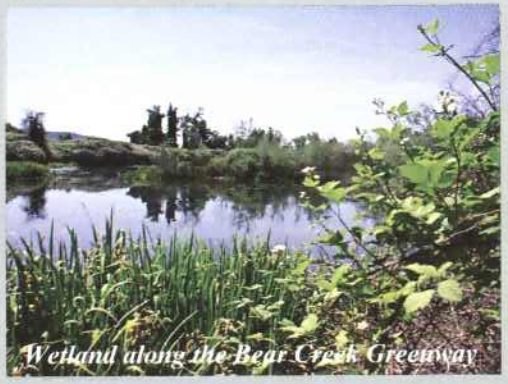
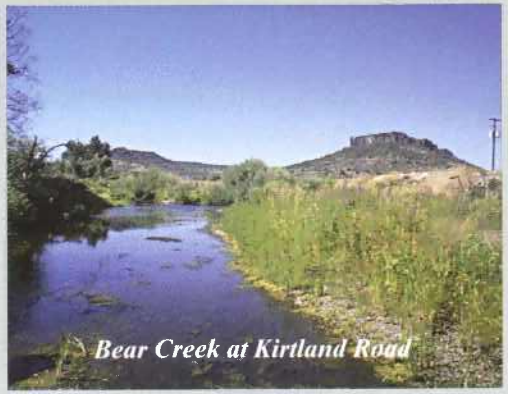
Why is it Important?

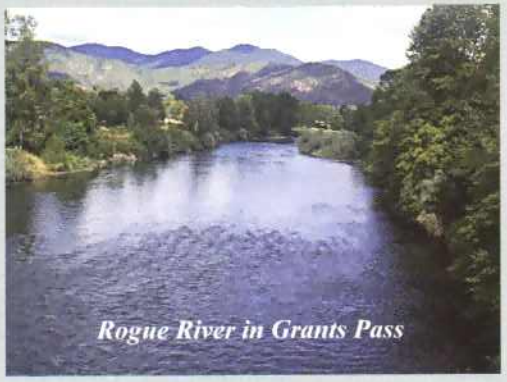
Protecting the storm drain system is important because most of the runoff that enters the storm drain system ends up in Bear Creek and the Rogue River. **Runoff entering storm drains is not routed to or treated by a wastewater treatment plant.**



Wetland along the Bear Creek Greenway



Bear Creek at Kirtland Road



Rogue River in Grants Pass

For more information or to report concerns contact:

Rogue Valley Sewer Services
138 W. Vilas Road
Central Point, OR 97502
www.rvss.us
(541) 664-6300

Agency Contact Information

DEQ Hazardous Waste Technical Assistance - (541) 776-6010 ext. 239

DEQ Solid Waste Issues - (541) 776-6010 ext. 242

Spills - Oregon Emergency Response (OERS) - 1-800-452-0311

Additional Contacts

Ashland - (541) 488-5587 or (541) 488-5305
Medford - (541) 774-2100 or (541) 774-2380
RVCOG Natural Resources Department - (541) 664-6674

Creeks and Concrete Don't Mix

Impacts of Concrete

Fresh concrete and cement-related mortars that wash into Bear Creek and the Rogue River are toxic to fish and the aquatic environment. In addition, concrete waste can solidify or build up in stormwater facilities, blocking the drainage flow, and causing localized flooding.

The lime found in cement and concrete products easily dissolves in water. Lime is alkaline, so as a result concrete slurry or water that comes into contact with cement or uncured concrete becomes strongly alkaline (pH 11-13). **This is deadly to aquatic life.** High pH solutions such as slurry or concrete washwater will attack the sensitive membranes of fish, including the gills and skin.

Other impacts include high amounts of suspended sediments from concrete washwater, and increases in sedimentation or turbidity from materials disturbed or tracked out by trucks.

Runoff entering storm drains is not routed to or treated by a wastewater treatment plant prior to entering Bear Creek and the Rogue River.

What can be done?

Sidewalk and Concrete Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Best management practices (BMPs) can prevent or reduce the discharge of pollutants to stormwater from concrete construction work .

Using BMPs such as washing out equipment off-site, using on-site washouts located in designated areas, and training employees and subcontractors to consider how their work can affect water quality will reduce pollution entering storm drains and local waterways.

Things You Can Do

- Don't mix more fresh concrete or cement than you will use in a day.
- Set up and operate small mixers on tarps or heavy plastic drop cloths.
- When cleaning up after driveway or sidewalk construction, wash sediment onto dirt areas, not down the driveway or into the street or storm drains.
- Place straw bales or other erosion controls to catch runoff before it reaches the storm drains.
- Recycle large chunks of broken concrete.

General Practices

- Always store dry and wet materials under cover, protected from rain and runoff at both your yard and the construction site.
- Protect dry materials from wind.
- Schedule projects to avoid wet weather as much as possible.
- Seal and protect bags of cement once they are open to prevent exposure to rainfall. Be sure to keep wind-blown cement powder away from gutters, storm drains, and runoff.
- Install and use concrete washouts or place concrete in formed areas or plastic bags.
- Keep wash water out of storm drain systems and streams.

An example of a properly designed concrete washout. Washouts can be scaled down for use on smaller projects.