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Healing our Water

A Book about Stewardship

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You can help to heal our water

- Never dump anything down storm drains.
- Clean up after pets.
- Always put the right stuff down toilets.
- Never pour chemicals down the drain.
- Reduce the amount of trash you make.
- Use cloth grocery bags
- Pick up trash.
- Dispose of household hazardous waste properly.
- Buy things that don't have a lot of plastic packaging.
- Drink from reusable water bottles.
- Be a steward of our water!

Healing our Bodies

You can take care of your body and heal our water at the same time. First, be sure to drink lots of clean water to stay healthy. You can become **dehydrated** if you do not drink enough water. Second, buy a reusable water bottle. Water bottles are a great way to get the water you need. Glass or metal bottles are best. Third, don't buy water in plastic bottles from the store. This will just produce more trash in our waterways. Finally, if you buy a reusable plastic water bottle make sure that it is BPA free. BPA stands for **Bisphenol A**. Bisphenol A is a chemical in many types of plastic bottles. This chemical is bad for our health and the environment.



Healing our Water

Vocabulary

- steward
- stewardship
- storm drains
- hazardous waste
- conserve
- decompose
- cleanup events
- dehydrated

Healing our Water

Did you know there is a garbage patch in the Pacific Ocean that is larger than the United States? Every year a large amount of our trash ends up in the ocean. Trash also makes its way to streams and rivers. Some of this trash takes a really long time to **decompose**. A soda bottle can take 450 years to decompose. With all this trash, our water needs healing. You can help heal our water.

One way you can help is to pick up trash. You can make it a habit to pick up litter whenever you see it. You can also participate in trash **cleanup events**. Every year in Juneau there are cleanup events. In the spring you can volunteer for Litter Free Cleanup Day. In the fall you can participate in Alaska's Coastal Cleanup Day.



Pick up trash.

Slash your Trash

Americans throw out 195 million tons of garbage every year. That is a lot of garbage! Much of this garbage becomes litter which ends up in our waterways. You can find trash in our streams, rivers and oceans. This is bad for plants, animals and people. Clearly, we need to reduce our trash.

There is much you can do to reduce your trash. Many things we buy are covered in plastic. When we get home we remove the plastic and throw it away. You can choose to buy things that are not covered in layers of plastic. This will reduce your trash. You can also use cloth bags at the grocery store. Plastic grocery bags become trash the moment you get home. Using a cloth bag will reduce your trash.



Taking Care of our Water

Our planet never gets any new water. All of our water must be used over and over again. People, animals, plants, birds, and fish all need water to live. It makes good sense to take care of our water.



Who Takes Care of our Water?

Trained workers clean our water every day. These workers have jobs in our waste water treatment plants. They are stewards of our water.

A **steward** is someone who takes care of the land, air and sea. When you have a responsibility to take care of something that is not yours, it is called **stewardship**.

Taking care of our water is everyone's responsibility. Everyone can be a steward of the water. Kids can be stewards of the water too. Here are a few ways you can be a steward of the water.

Respect Storm Drains

Storm drains are located along the sides of our roads. They drain water from our streets. In some cities they drain directly to streams and creeks. In Juneau, everything dumped into a storm drain ends up in Gastineau Channel. This includes used motor oil, dog poop, chemicals, and garbage. You can help be the solution to water pollution. Never pour anything into a storm drain.



Conserve Water

It is important not to waste our water. We only have so much water on our planet. Of all the water on Earth, 99% is unusable by humans. This is because most of Earth's water is salt water. Our oceans and seas make up 97% of our water. Another 2% is frozen in our ice caps and glaciers. This leaves just 1% of the water on Earth for us to use. If we are careful, there will be enough water for everyone.



Hazardous Waste Clean-up Day

Juneau has several hazardous waste clean-up days a year. On these days you can get rid of your hazardous waste safely. You can take your waste to an outdoor area near Costco. The waste that is collected is then disposed of safely. This is very important because it protects our health and our environment. Our city provides a list of the waste you can bring. You can find this list online at *Juneau Waste Management*.



Scoop the Poop

When a pet poops outside it can be bad for our water and our health. Pet waste can be washed into storm drains and streams. This adds pollution to our water that can make us sick. This is because there are bacteria and other harmful things in dog poop. This is bad for animals too. When dog waste gets into water streams it cause issues for many kinds of wildlife. Picking up after your pet dog can solve this problem.



Flush Responsibly

Always put the right stuff in toilets. Never put medicines or dangerous chemicals down the toilet. Our waste water treatment facilities are not able to treat dangerous chemicals. If you pour chemicals down the drain, they might end up in your local rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. You know what belongs in the toilet! Everything else should be disposed of properly.



Always put the right
stuff in toilets.

Household Hazardous Waste

Dangerous waste is called **hazardous waste**. This waste is poisonous. It can harm our health and the environment.

Many of the things we use in our homes create hazardous waste. Paint and used batteries are hazardous waste. Both contain dangerous chemicals. Some light bulbs contain mercury which is poisonous. Old medicines and used motor oil are also hazardous waste.

It is really important to dispose of hazardous waste safely. It is unsafe to pour hazardous waste down the drain. If you pour hazardous chemicals down the drain, they might end up in your local rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. These chemicals harm our salmon and other animals. It is also unsafe to put hazardous waste into our trash cans.

So what should you do with your hazardous waste?