

Dog Waste

Protecting your Family, your Pets and the Environment



People love dogs; it's estimated there are 72 million dogs in the America. Guess how much waste all of these pets produce? Using a conservative estimate, more than **8 billion pounds** a year! That's a lot of poop. Here in Washington State, there are over 1.6 million dogs, and 16,750 live in Clallam County. Dogs produce over **2 million** pounds of waste a year in Clallam County alone. Just think what it would be like if people didn't pick up after their dogs!



Charlie's glad people pick up after their dogs at Port Williams.

Aside from being smelly and unsightly, dog waste can also be a health hazard. Fido's droppings can contain disease causing organisms and viruses that make people and pets sick, as well as pollute the water. Fortunately, it's easy to protect yourself, your pets and the environment by scooping dog waste, bagging it and putting it the trash.

Even cute dogs can have germs



Puppies are more at risk for having diseases that can be passed by feces from dog to dog and dog to people.

It's important to know that dogs sometimes carry harmful germs that can make people and other dogs sick. A dog may not even look or act sick and still carry harmful bacteria or parasites.

Most human illnesses from pet waste are caused by tiny, often invisible amounts of fecal matter that enters the body through the mouth. Children are especially at risk because they play on the ground and frequently put their hands in their mouths. Fecal material can also be accidentally swallowed while swimming in water that looks clean but is polluted or eating shellfish that has been contaminated by dog waste left on a beach.

Freshly deposited dog droppings that contain harmful bacteria and parasites such as Salmonella, Campylobacter or Giardia cysts, are immediately infectious to people. But older, dried-out or disintegrated dog waste is **more likely** to contain harmful parasite eggs. For example, hookworms

take 6-12 days to become infectious and may survive up to 3-4 weeks in the environment. Roundworm eggs must age a week or more in dog stool to become infectious. If feces are washed into the soil and allowed to disintegrate into the ground, parasite eggs can remain viable for years, resulting in long-term contamination of the soil. In addition to posing a threat to human health, dog waste can also harm other pets and animals. Coccidia are parasites that are spread through fecal matter; puppies are most at risk and the disease can be deadly. Parvovirus is transmitted from dog to dog through contact with feces and can be life threatening. It is highly contagious due to its hardiness and ability to remain infectious for many months.

Which way to the water?

When it rains, storm water runoff transports pollutants and pet waste pathogens, bacteria, and excess nutrients from upland areas to nearby streams, rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. Bacteria and other pathogens can contaminate shellfish, which feed by filtering the water. People who eat shellfish harvested from the area can become sick.

It's easy to prevent all these problems!



All photos: Leslie Wright

Sniper appreciates clean water when cooling off at Cline Spit.

Scoop it, bag it & put it in the trash.

Grab a pet waste bag and....

- Place your hand on the inside of the bag like you're putting on a glove.
- Pick up the dog waste & turn the bag inside out with your free hand.
- Secure the bag, ensuring it is tied tightly so it doesn't open when thrown away.
- Put the bag in a trashcan if one is available or take it home & dispose of it.

Tips for dealing with dog waste:

Prevent your dog from pooping near water or a storm drain or ditch. If you can't, it's extra important to pick up any waste that can get to water to prevent pollution.

Leave no trace. If there is no trashcan, take the bag home. Never leave bags by the side of the trail or toss them into the woods. This just creates two kinds of pollution – pet waste AND plastic waste!

Biodegradable bags are not necessary. Once in the landfill the plastic may not ever decompose, even if it is biodegradable, making these bags unnecessary.

Bring an extra bag. Offer a bag to someone who forgot theirs and consider picking up waste left behind by others. Lead by example in taking care of our parks and natural areas. You and your dog will be heroes!

Learn more. Visit www.bit.ly/WSUpetwaste

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