



# Floodplains, Watersheds, Clean Rivers

37 inches of rain. Where does it all go?



# Where does it all go? **Hydrology** tells us.

About 37 inches of rain falls in Portland in a typical year, and that water needs somewhere to go. Urban development reshaped Portland's landscape and its hydrology. With fewer trees and open spaces, hard surfaces like streets, parking lots and roofs cause rain to run off instead of soaking into the earth.

Without proper management, rain and stormwater can contribute to erosion and flooding, which can damage roads and property. **If you live or work in a floodplain, here are some important things you should keep in mind.**

- Avoid walking or driving through flood waters. If you can't, use a stick to steady yourself going through flowing water.
- Learn how to assemble a disaster supplies kit. Go to [www.portlandoregon.gov/pbem/53983](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/pbem/53983).
- Stay away from downed power lines and report them to your electric utility, **PGE at 1-800-542-8818** or **Pacific Power at 1-877-508-5088**.

## **PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY**

- Make an inventory of your property.
- Shut off the gas and electricity and move valuable contents upstairs if you know a flood is coming.

**STAY SAFE**

## **CHECK YOUR INSURANCE**

Basic homeowners insurance doesn't cover flood damage. If you have a mortgage and live in the 100-year floodplain, you're probably required to carry flood insurance. Portland residents can get a discount on flood insurance because Portland participates in FEMA's Community Rating System. For more information, go to **FloodSmart.gov**.

## **CONSTRUCTION**

Construction and adding or moving soil in the flood hazard area require permits. Call 503-823-6892 before you build for more information. If you see construction without a city permit sign posted, call 503-823-CODE.

*Hydrology is how water flows across the land and in rivers and streams.*

—Portland's Watershed Report Cards  
[www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/reportcards](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/reportcards)

## **BE INFORMED**

- Find out if your home or business is in a floodplain. Visit **PortlandMaps.com**, enter your address, click on "Maps," then choose "Hazard."
- Most local radio and television stations provide weather and flood information.
- Go to [www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/rfc](http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/rfc) to get river level information.
- Check Portland weather conditions—Portland National Weather Service at **503-261-9246** or [www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr).
- Subscribe to the city's public emergency notifications at [www.publicalerts.org](http://www.publicalerts.org).
- Follow **@PublicAlerts** on Twitter.

## **REMOVE PAVEMENT, ADD RAIN GARDEN, AND SOLVE THIS CHURCH'S HYDROLOGY PROBLEM.**

For several years, St. Mary Ethiopian Orthodox Church frequently flooded during even moderate winter rains. Costly repairs to a drywell system in the church parking lot failed to fix the problem. Church members had to place sandbags around the building and use pumps almost every time it rained. In 2013, church members worked with the Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Green Lents and Depave to **remove 2,500 square feet of asphalt and replace it with a native plant rain garden** that now soaks up the water from the parking lot. **Over 80 volunteers** participated in the depaving and plantings, and dozens more attended an Ethiopian dinner fundraiser.

An Environmental Services Community Watershed Stewardship Program (CWSP) grant helped fund the project. In addition to solving the church's flooding issues, the project helps protect water quality in Johnson Creek by keeping the parking lot's untreated stormwater runoff out of the creek, and it creates additional habitat for pollinators. Learn more about CWSP at **[www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/CWSP](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/CWSP)**.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
CITY OF PORTLAND

working for clean rivers



Nick Fish, Commissioner • Michael Jordan, Director

### **Environmental Services**

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**[www.portlandoregon.gov/bes](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes) • 503-823-7740**

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