

BELOW IS A LIST OF 10 SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO BE A GOOD STEWARD AND HELP IMPROVE THE WATER.

1. **Plant native vegetation in your yard** to provide shade, shelter and food for fish and animals and to prevent erosion. [Native species](#) do not require pesticides or fertilizers and are drought tolerant and disease resistant.
2. **Cover bare soil with mulch or plants** to reduce the need to water and to prevent erosion.
3. [Eliminate pesticides](#) and minimize fertilizer use. High levels of dangerous pesticides, can be deadly to fish and other wildlife. Over-used fertilizers can also be harmful to wildlife by overwhelming streams with unusually high nutrient levels. Start your own [compost pile](#) as a source of free, natural fertilizer for your yard.
4. [Disconnect your downspout](#). Leave gutters in place while directing the downspout into your yard or a rain barrel for yard watering. This can help prevent creek flooding by filtering the rainwater through the soil into groundwater, rather than sending it directly into the creek or into a combined sewer. Be sure to check with your local government before disconnecting, as some soil types and topography are not amenable to downspout disconnection.
5. Remove unnecessary concrete or other impervious surfaces on your property to allow rainwater to soak into the ground, which will provide cold groundwater to creeks in the summer. Concrete may be replaced with other materials, such as pervious paving, flagstones or gravel.
6. Prevent run-off by sweeping patios and sidewalks instead of hosing them. Hosing wastes water and carries contaminants into the creek. Also, wash your car on the lawn with biodegradable soap or at a car wash that recycles water.
7. Clean up animal waste to prevent it from washing into the creek and contaminating the water.
8. Drive less. Use transit, bike, walk or carpool. Vehicle exhaust causes the pollutant polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons.
9. Keep your car properly maintained so oil and other automotive solutions do not run into the creek. Always recycle your left-over motor oil curbside or at automobile shops. Properly dispose of other hazardous automotive products, solvents or yard chemicals at a [hazardous waste facility](#) or [neighborhood collection events](#).
10. Become a friend of your nearby creek and volunteer!

Source: Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Portland, Oregon

Web site: www.jcwc.org/getInvolved/stewardship.htm