



Snohomish County
Public Works Department

Pet Waste Management and Water Quality



Dog Owner Focus Groups

November 2004



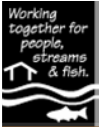
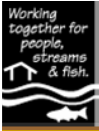


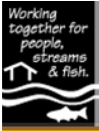
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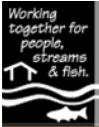
Background

- Snohomish County initiated a project to reduce fecal coliform bacteria from pet waste in streams.
- Past studies in other areas determined that 30% to 40% of dog owners do not clean up after walking their dog but that over 60% agree that pet waste contributes to water quality problems. These findings indicate that people may be willing to change their behaviors given the proper tools and motivation.
- Snohomish County contracted Elway Research to conduct research among watershed residents to determine the barriers to proper disposal of pet waste and to analyze how to motivate and support behavior changes in the area.
- This report summarizes the results from the exploratory phase of the research project.



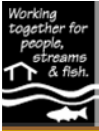
Research Objectives

- The purpose of this research project is to assess the attitudes and opinions of County residents related to pet waste disposal practices and water quality in Snohomish County
- Specific objectives include:
 - Ascertain awareness and knowledge levels of watersheds, water quality issues, factors contributing to water pollution
 - Understand attitudes and behaviors associated with pet waste management and disposal
 - Determine barriers to proper disposal of pet waste
 - Identify motivators that support proper disposal of pet waste
 - Explore reactions to messaging ideas



Application of Research

- Information from this initial qualitative phase of research will be used to:
 - Design the quantitative questionnaire
- Information from the next phase of research (quantitative survey) will be used to determine:
 - How County staff can best reach watershed residents with information and educational messages about properly disposing of pet waste
 - What type of information and assistance residents want
 - How to motivate and support residents in adopting proper pet waste disposal practices

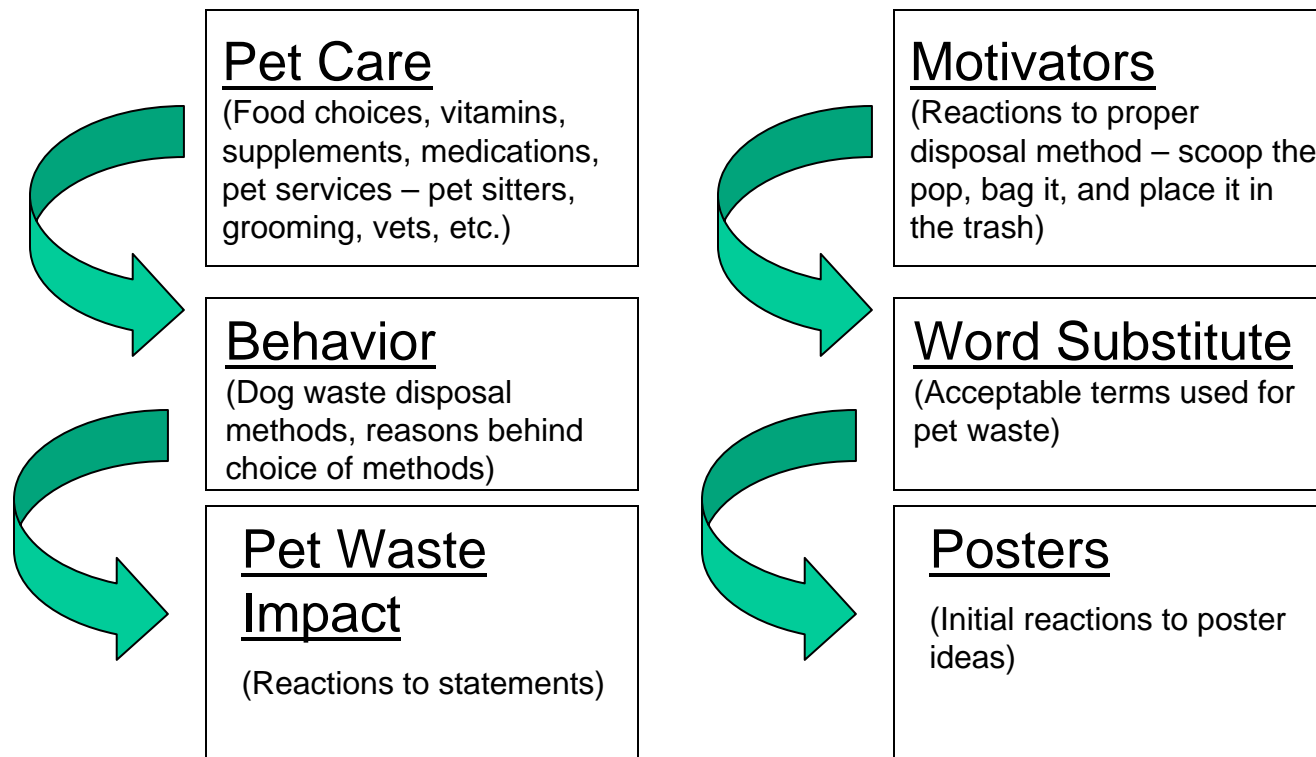


Methodology – First Phase

- Two focus group discussions were conducted
 - Wednesday, November 17th (6:00 PM and 8:00 PM)
- A cross-section of residents were recruited from different parts of Snohomish County (refer to screener for zip code areas)
- A total of 21 respondents participated
 - 11 respondents in Group 1
 - 10 respondents in Group 2
- Discussion was video taped, and lasted approximately 90 minutes for each group
- Respondents were paid \$50 for their participation

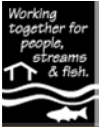
Discussion Flow

The flow chart below maps the flow of discussion





Summary of Discussions



A Dogs' Typical Day

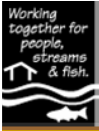
Respondents were asked to describe how their dog typically spends the day.

- More dogs in Group 1 than in Group 2 spend time during the day outside.
- Most dog owners control outdoor access for their dogs. A few owners allow their dogs open access to the outside any time of day through a dog door or open door.
- Nearly all dog owners have fenced yards (one respondent in Group 2 has an invisible fence).
- Two respondents in Group 2 don't have a fenced yard (one has a runner cable instead; the other has her dog on a retractable lead and supervises visits outside).
- About half the dog owners in Group 1 and all the dog owners in Group 2 regularly or occasionally walk their dog.



A Typical Dog's Day – Group Comparison
(Number of Respondents Answering)

	Group 1 (Do Not Pick Up)	Group 2 (Pick Up/Don't Bag)
<i>Dog Ownership</i>		
• Own One Dog	7	7
• Own More than one dog	4	3
<i>Type of Dog</i>		
• Small-sized breed	3	3
• Medium-sized breed	4	4
• Large-sized breed	4	3
<i>Where Dog Spends Most of the Day</i>		
• Small fenced yard (< 1 acre)	1	1
• Large fenced yard (1-5 acres)	1	-
• Inside the house	3	6
• Split between outside/inside	6	3
<i>Outdoor Access</i>		
• Controlled by owner	9	6
• At will of dog (dog door/open door access outside)	2	4
<i>Outdoor Supervision</i>		
• Mostly unsupervised	5	3
• Mostly supervised	6	7
<i>Goes For Walks with Owner</i>		
• Regularly	4	5
• Occasionally	1	5
• Rarely/never	6	-



Dog Diet

- A couple of respondents volunteered that they buy high-quality dog food with fewer fillers to reduce the frequency their dog poops, and to increase the firmness of dog poop for easier pick up.
 - “A girlfriend informed me that it’ll stick in the stools and it’ll be easier to clean with this brand so I went with it and it works.” (Group 2)
- In general, respondents name several reasons for choosing their dog food
 - Recommendation from a breeder, vet, friend or relative
 - Trial and error to find a food their dog will eat
 - PetSmart brand
- Many respondents give their dogs regular flea treatments, such as Advantage, Revolution, or Frontline.
- One respondent gives their dog Pet Tabs (nutritional supplement)

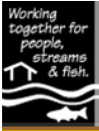
What Dogs Eat

Group 1 (Do Not Pick Up)

- Royal Canine Kibble
- Wellness wet food
- Iams (pellets – 2)
- Purina dry food only
- Purina One (plus toast in AM/chicken breast in PM)
- Purina (add eggs, meat, cheese)
- Science Diet
- Dry dog food (don't recall brand - 3)
- Lady Dog canned food
- Beneful Beef (allergic to chicken)

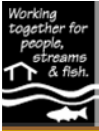
Group 2 (Pick Up/Don't Bag)

- Kirkland rice and lamb mix
- Iams lamb and rice
- Kibbles and Bits, table scraps
- Pro Plan (2)
- Canidae dry
- Authority (PetSmart brand - 2)
- Pedigree (canned)
- Nutro Max dry



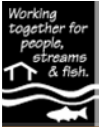
Pet Services

- All respondents take their dog to the vet
 - One respondent buys vaccines over the internet (gives her cats and her dog their shots except for rabies)
- A couple of respondents in Group 1 and seven respondents in Group 2 take their dog to a groomer; one respondent takes her dog to a professional for toenail treatments.
- When going away on vacation, a couple of respondents will take their dog to a kennel or hire a house sitter.
- One respondent in Group 1 has dog food delivered to his house.



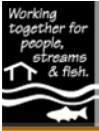
Dog Waste Management

- Many respondents compost dog poop with yard waste, or scoop it into a plastic bag and throw it in the garbage. A few respondents bury it or throw it over a fence. One respondent flushes dog waste down the toilet, and another respondent just leaves it.
- In both groups, respondents mention that rainy weather can deter them from picking up dog waste in their yard.
- Other barriers to pick up, mentioned by both groups, include:
 - Laziness
 - Being unprepared (forgot bag)
 - Being disgusted by dog waste/don't want to touch it
- Motivators for picking up dog waste that were mentioned in both groups include:
 - To be considerate
 - To keep the area clean where kids play
 - Keep off shoes, keep from tracking it in the house



Waste Pickup: Verbatim Comments

- “I use a plastic bag and turn it inside out over my hand, grab it, scoop it and pull the bag. Unless she’s in her own yard then it kind of stays there and then when we need to pick it up, we can compost it, we do.” (Group 1)
- “I just grab a shovel and just toss it way in the back of my backyard and then I put the grass clippings on top of it.” (Group 1)
- “I scoop it and put it in a bucket and when the bucket gets full, I take it out in the woods and dump it in the compost pile.” (Group 1)
- “If they go on the patio... I hose it off and just hose it off to the grass... I don’t have to get anywhere near it just sort of spray it from very far away.” (Group 1)
- “I just mow over it. (Group 1)
- “When it’s dry out, we’ll just scoop it right up... When it’s wet and it’s rainy and you take a shovel, you’re just going to smear it clear across your grass and you’re not going to get it up.” (Group 1)
- “Our primary method is digging a hole and putting stuff in the hole and putting dirt over the top of it... We do that to keep the smell out of the yard and stuff out of the yard.” (Group 1)
- “I scoot it into the bushes.” (Group 1)
- “ We just have a huge pile out in the back with all of our yard clippings and everything else because It’s protected wetlands. We’re not allowed to build on it or mow it down so we’ll just put all that stuff on it.” (Group 1)
- “I mow the lawn probably eight months out of the year and if droppings are in the way, I’ll just kick them into the field. I have fields on three sides of my house.” (Group 1)
- “We have two vacant lots adjacent to our property so I just take the shovel and throw it out there.” (Group 1)



Waste Pickup: Verbatim Comments (2/2)

- “Depends on my mood and the weather. If it’s nice out, then I’ll go out there and pick it up right away, and we have a trash can that we collect it in, but if it is yucky out then I just leave it.” (Group 2)
- “I’ll go around with a shovel and clean up the whole yard and put it in a hole and dirt on top...It’s just one less bag that ends up in the trash and the environment.” (Group 2)
- “I’ve done everything from burying it under the bark to flinging it to the greenbelt behind me.” (Group 2)
- “I place it in the yard waste bin.” (Group 1)
- “I either compost or put it in the garbage, and it’s mainly convenience... If someone had some particular reason they want to recycle it, I could fill a bin for them.” (Group 2)
- “We usually pick it up and flush it down the toilet. Our yard is really small and our kid plays in the yard. If I get really lazy, I’ll just toss them in a bag and put it in the garbage, but I also do the garbage so when I go to take out the garbage, it stinks really bad so we usually flush it down the toilet.” (Group 2)
- “I either shovel it and put it in the garbage can or pick it up in the lawn mower and put it in the lawn waste, a compost pile.” (Group 2)
- “I put it in the yard waste bin with lots of grass clippings, too, so it doesn’t get messy.” (Group 2)
- “I use a pooper scooper from PetSmart. It’s a little flat thing with a handle and you don’t have to bend over versus with a shovel you go like that and you damage the grass and then you lose it. This thing, you just pull it up, scrape it, put it in the bin, dump it and you’re done. You don’t have to bend over or anything.” (Group 2)

Where Dogs Relieve Themselves

Group 1 (Do Not Pick Up)

- Backyard (own/neighbor's)
- Park (when go for a walk)
- Sidewalk
- Woods
- Garden
- In house (accidents)
- Patio

Group 2 (Pick Up/Don't Bag)

- Grass (backyard)
- Strip near street
- Beauty bark
- Garden
- Gravel driveway
- Mail box
- Light pole
- Petco floor
- Carpet

Reasons Not to Pick Up

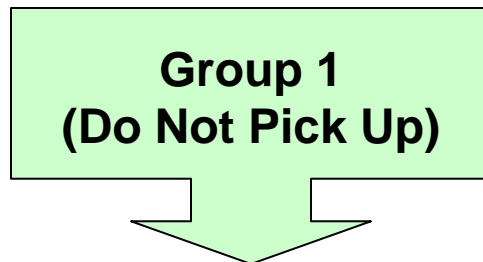
Group 1 (Do Not Pick Up)

- Embarrassment (went in neighbors yard)
- Out of site, out of mind
- Lazy
- Don't want to touch
- Too disgusting
- Forgot their bag
- Makes grass grow
- Weather (rain – gets too mushy)
- Time constraints
- My yard
- Keep coyotes out

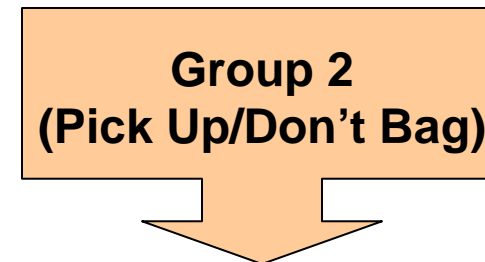
Group 2 (Pick Up/Don't Bag)

- Lazy
- Not prepared to pick it up
- Disgusted by it
- All natural, let it go
- Not my turn (kids supposed to do it)
- Dark
- Rainy weather

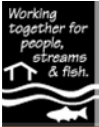
Reasons to Pick Up



- Don't track it in house
- Hard to get off shoes
- Hard to get off tennis shoes with treads
- Consideration for others
- Aesthetics (clean, looks good, no one sees)
- Doesn't smell bad
- No flies
- A place for kids to play (won't get worms, parasites, bacteria)
- Law/ordinance

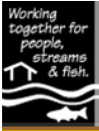


- Others around/public or peer pressure
- To be considerate
- Unsanitary
- Kids playing
- Will get on shoes
- Don't want to step in it
- Easier pick up on ground than carpet
- Attracts rats



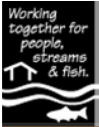
Primary/Secondary Pickup Methods

	Group 1 (Do Not Pick Up)	Group 2 (Pick Up/Don't Bag)
Primary Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rake/throw into compost pile/yard waste/decay pile (4) • Shovel/throw over fence/into adjacent lot (2) • Pooper -scooper/shovel (general – 2) • Put in garbage (general – 1) • Don't do anything/leave in yard (1) • Dig hole and bury it (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoop into plastic bag and throw in garbage (4) • Rake/throw into compost pile/yard waste (3) • Put in garbage (general –1) • Dig hole and bury it (1) • Flush in the toilet (1)
Secondary Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up with plastic bag and throw in garbage (6) • No secondary methods (3) • Put in compost/yard pile/yard waste (1) • Pick it up (general –1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up with plastic bag and throw in garbage (4) • Put in compost/yard pile/yard waste (4) • Bury it in yard (1) • No secondary methods (1)



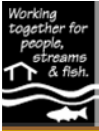
Impact Statement Reactions

- Compared to other water pollution sources, most respondents do not believe pet waste is a major contributor.
- In general, many respondents struggle with the idea that dog waste could be so harmful to wildlife and other children.
- Most respondents believe there are 126,000 dogs living in Snohomish County (some think more), but they don't believe there is a city's worth of "untreated" sewage as a result because in their mind most people are composting or disposing of dog waste properly.



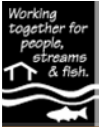
Reaction to Statement: Verbatim Comments

- “I think there’s more problems with littering garbage in it than there is animal waste.” (Group 1)
- “I think if you took out the word major, I would say that it probably is a contributor because we do have wetlands and the green belts that feed into larger bodies of water.” (Group 1)
- “Compared to cattle and everything else walking in there, I don’t think my little dog poop is going to do anything.” (Group 1)
- “The ships do more damage to Puget Sound than an animal does.” (Group 1)
- “Out of consideration for other people, we all look after our own dog waste; we don’t want our kids playing in it, so we get it out of the way. We do it out of consideration for other people, not because we believe it’s a polluter or because it’s somehow killing fish in Puget Sound... We do it because it’s obnoxious and we want to get rid of it.” (Group 1)
- “If it’s your yard it’s your business, and if you don’t have a conflict with it, if it doesn’t kill your grass or anything, then it should be fine.” (Group 1)
- “The word nutrients means to nourish...so if it’s something that the dog hasn’t been able to use and it’s still left in the waste, and if it’s still a nutrient and not a bacteria, it would be beneficial.” (Group 1)
- “I don’t see dogs taking a poop in there. It would be true if I took all my dog waste and threw it in the stream. I imagine it wouldn’t be good for the stream at all.” (Group 1)
- “I’ve never heard of E coli coming from a dog.” (Group 1)
- “You can use a shovel; you don’t have to touch it. How can that be hazardous? Worse things come out of babies than what I’ve picked up out of my yard.” (Group 1)



Verbatim Comments Continued (2/3)

- “Thankfully we don’t really have to worry about the water we swim in yet, but I know in Turkey you can’t swim because it’s too polluted and too dirty.” (Group 1)
- “I know animal waste is really hard on fish, particularly in small streams where they spawn.” (Group 1)
- “Percentage wise to all the cars and crap going around, I’m sure it’s a contributor, but a major one? No.” (Group 2)
- “I hunt a lot and I see feces everywhere I go, and it’s been there for generations and generations. To me, the dog waste, unless it’s something in the food that we’re feeding them that’s not natural, which I only hope not, I don’t see it as a big, big problem.” (Group 2)
- “My thoughts are that wildlife is a natural recycling process but with what we feed our dogs and what we treat our dogs with – medications, flea drops – no, it’s not natural recycling so it is going into the wildlife.” (Group 2)
- “I was kind of on the fence on a lot of these, because what’s natural and what’s in our dog food are two different things.” (Group 2)
- “Nobody wants to see a big pile of poop going down the stream, but there is stuff in there that little bacteria will eat that will go up the chain, so there is some good that comes of it, but I don’t want tons of it flowing down.” (Group 2)
- “If you are talking about big piles of it, sure, but normal everyday use – I think more and more people pick up and put away than do not dispose of it properly.” (Group 2)
- “Wildlife does not eat poop; it disintegrates and it takes a while, but it’s in the wild.” (Group 2)
- “I don’t know of any kids that died from playing around in dog waste and somehow eating some of it.” (Group 2)
- “They might not die from it, but they can get E coli. They can also get tapeworms.” (Group 2)



Verbatim Comments Continued (3/3)

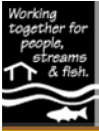
- “I camp in a campground which has a stream running right through it and there’s cattle and horses that run wild in that area... They put a fence 10 feet from the stream... The state thinks it’s fine to have it within 10 feet, so dog feces shouldn’t be that detrimental to the stream.” (Group 2)
- “When it rains, it all goes somewhere. In the runoff it’s going to end up in some stream whether it’s near there or not.” (Group 2)
- “I don’t want to scoop up somebody else’s dog poop on my yard.” (Group 2)
- “The idea of it being that much untreated... I’m not sure what you meant untreated. I feel like what I do, it gets mulched.” (Group 2)
- “For me taking care of just my pet, there is a minimal amount, but if you’ve got a company that’s going around and picking it up and putting it all in one location untreated somewhere, that’s a whole different story. How are they being regulated to take care of it?” (Group 2)



Information Needs

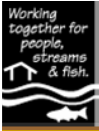
In reaction to the statements, respondents want to know...

- Statistics – Are they having to purify more water as a result? Is it something they are able to filter down to only being household dog waste, and that is the only way that pollutant can get in the water? How much is being harmed by dog poop? How many fish are dying?
- How is it harmful? If wildlife or kids eat it? What byproducts are harmful? Whatever the dog didn't absorb from the food?
- Would it be better if we flushed it so they could treat it? (raw sewage)
- Why is it so extremely hazardous to have it in a compost pile or to leave it in our yard?
 - “We've done this research and it's harmful for this reason and that reason” (Group 1)
- Is there a problem with the food we feed our dogs? Medications?
 - “I'd like to know what we can do to make our pet waste safer at the beginning (dog food), not after.” (Group 2)
 - “If there is a company willing to produce a dog food that waste afterwards is less toxin to the environment, I'd buy that.” (Group 2)



Impact Statement Ratings

- Respondents in Group 1 are more likely than respondents in Group 2 to say *“dog waste is natural and doesn’t cause problems if left to break down naturally”* is a true statement.
- In general, most respondents believe there are nutrients, bacteria or by-products in dog waste that are harmful to streams and children.
- Most respondents in both groups say these statements are false:
 - *“it’s more hazardous to pick up dog waste than to leave it on the ground”*
 - *“Pet waste is a major contributor of pollution to streams, rivers, lakes, and Puget Sound.”*
 - *“Nobody picks up after raccoons and other wildlife, so dog waste can’t be a problem.”*
 - *“Dog waste is a problem only on public property.”*
 - *“Only people who live near streams or lakes need to worry about picking up their dog waste.”*



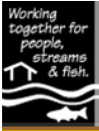
Impact Statement Ratings (cont.)

- One respondent suggests a comparison to motor oil may be more compelling.
 - *“It occurs to me that most of us believe you can’t just dump motor oil into your surrounding property, and what’s not on this list is anything that says that this would be the same kind of an issue. If there is waste and it’s finding its way into our water system, then I think that would be more persuasive than any of these that are listed.” (Group 1)*
 - *“You hear of more fish dying from oil spills than you do from dog poop.” (Group 1)*



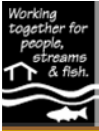
**Reactions to Pet Waste Impact Statements
(Number of Respondents Answering)**

How Rated Statement	Group 1 (Do Not Pick Up)			Group 2 (Pick Up/Don't Bag)		
	<i>True</i>	<i>False</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>True</i>	<i>False</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
Pet waste is a major contributor of pollution to streams, rivers, lakes, and Puget Sound.	2	9	-	2	8	-
Nobody picks up after raccoons and other wildlife, so dog waste can't be a problem.	1	9	1	4	6	-
Dog waste is natural and doesn't cause problems if left to break down naturally.	10	1	-	3	6	1
The nutrients in dog waste are good for my lawn and plants	3	6	2	3	6	1
The nutrients in dog waste are bad for streams.	8	2	1	7	3	-
By-products of dog waste are harmful to wildlife.	2	5	4	3	7	-
By-products of dog waste are harmful to children.	8	2	1	7	3	-
The bacteria in dog waste are bad for streams.	8	2	1	7	3	-
Dog waste should be cleaned up because it's the law.	8	1	2	7	3	-
Only people who live near streams or lakes need to worry about picking up their dog waste.	-	10	1	-	10	-
Bacterial contamination from pet waste is a threat to human health.	6	3	2	8	2	-
Dog waste is a problem only on public property.	4	7	-	-	9	1
<i>E. coli</i> , <i>Cryptosporidium</i> , <i>Campylobacteriosis</i> , <i>Toxocariasis</i> , <i>Toxoplasmosis</i> , and <i>Giardia</i> , are all microorganisms that can be transmitted from pet waste to humans.	7	2	2	10	-	-
It's more hazardous to pick up dog waste than to leave it on the ground.	-	11	-	3	7	-
More than 126,000 dogs live in Snohomish County, producing a city's worth of untreated raw sewage.	4	3	4	6	2	2



Most Compelling Reasons (1/2)

- Respondents are told that scientists believe the best way to manage pet waste is for residents to scoop dog waste, put it into a plastic bag and place it in the trash.
- Based on discussion, respondents struggle to identify compelling reasons to get people to clean up and dispose of dog waste using this method (scoop, bag, place in trash).
 - “I personally don’t think it’s the best way... you’re talking about a lot of extra waste going into landfills.” (Group 1)
 - “It’s a plastic bag, it doesn’t break down at all.” (Group 1)
 - “I think the garbage man has a disgusting enough job without me throwing a plastic bag in there, and something on top breaking it up, and then he’s having to smell that.” (Group 1)
 - “I’m not going to bag up my dog’s waste until I’m presented with a credible case and a reasonable case that it’s bad, harmful to the environment.” (Group1)
 - “If it’s that bad, it shouldn’t be in the general garbage anyway... Shouldn’t it be taken care of like oil, house paint?” (Group 1)



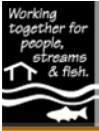
Most Compelling Reasons (2/2)

- “I was thinking of the mulching, recycling and so if that’s the best thing to do.” (Group 2)
- I’m not convinced that’s the best way to go... I don’t know the process where my yard waste goes, what they do with it, if they make fertilizer.” (Group 2)
- “If you put it in plastic bags and you put it in a landfill, is that better?” (Group 2)
- Respondents in Group 2 have an easier time than respondents in Group 1 to identify some compelling reasons to use the recommended method.
 - “The fact that bacteria is bad for the streams and harmful to wildlife and could be harmful to kids.” (Group 2)
 - “The ones that had to do with pollution, being harmful to wildlife and children.” (Group 2)
 - “It’s easier than digging a hole.” (Group 2)
- In general, respondents want to see data that supports bagging it and putting it in the trash.
 - “I would have to see some data where they’re saying particularly dog waste is harming the streams and the water in the area.” (Group 2)



Most Compelling Statements
(Number of Respondents Answering)

	Group 1 (Do Not Pick Up)	Group 2 (Pick Up/Don't Bag)
<i>Selected Statement with an X</i>		
Pet waste is a major contributor of pollution to streams, rivers, lakes, and Puget Sound.	1	6
Nobody picks up after raccoons and other wildlife, so dog waste can't be a problem.	-	1
Dog waste is natural and doesn't cause problems if left to break down naturally.	-	1
The nutrients in dog waste are good for my lawn and plants	-	1
The nutrients in dog waste are bad for streams.	1	6
By-products of dog waste are harmful to wildlife.	1	4
By-products of dog waste are harmful to children.	-	6
The bacteria in dog waste are bad for streams.	5	7
Dog waste should be cleaned up because it's the law.	-	3
Only people who live near streams or lakes need to worry about picking up their dog waste.	-	1
Bacterial contamination from pet waste is a threat to human health.	2	7
Dog waste is a problem only on public property.	-	1
<i>E. coli, Cryptosporidium, Campylobacteriosis, Toxocariasis, Toxoplasmosis, and Giardia</i> , are all microorganisms that can be transmitted from pet waste to humans.	-	8
It's more hazardous to pick up dog waste than to leave it on the ground.	-	2
More than 126,000 dogs live in Snohomish County, producing a city's worth of untreated raw sewage.	4	6



Acceptable Terms for Dog Waste

- Respondents were asked which terms for dog waste would be acceptable to use in education materials and other publications for Snohomish County residents.
- Most respondents selected these terms as acceptable:
 - Pet waste
 - Poop
 - Droppings
 - Excrement
 - Feces

Terms Use to Describe Dog Waste

Group 1 (Do Not Pick Up)

- Steaming divots
- Land mines
- Mole hole
- Abbey bombs
- Doggy donuts
- Crap
- Poop
- Piles
- Doggy droppings

Group 2 (Pick Up/Don't Bag)

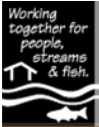
- Shit
- Poop
- Turds
- Crap
- Gold nuggets
- Land mines
- Doggie Doo-Doo
- Beagle bombs
- Mess
- Dump



**Acceptability of Terms for Publications
(Number of Respondents Answering)**

Words Used to Describe Dog Waste	Group 1 (Do Not Pick Up)			Group 2 (Pick Up/Don't Bag)		
	Acceptable	Unacceptable	NA	Acceptable	Unacceptable	NA
Poop	8	3	-	8	2	-
Bomb	3	6	2	2	5	3
Calling card	2	8	1	1	5	4
Pile	5	5	1	4	3	3
Crap	4	6	1	2	6	2
Dung	5	5	1	3	5	2
Excrement	7	2	2	6	2	2
Droppings	8	3	-	6	2	2
Dump	1	7	3	4	3	3
Fecal matter	4	5	2	8	2	-
Feces	5	3	3	7	1	2
Package	-	8	3	1	5	4
Land mines	3	7	1	2	4	4
Manure	5	4	2	4	2	4
Nuggets	1	7	3	1	6	3
Number two	4	6	1	1	4	5
Doogies	-	8	3	1	4	5
Scat	1	9	1	2	5	3
Souvenirs	1	6	4	1	5	4
Stool	4	4	3	7	1	2
Lawn sausage	1	8	2	-	8	2
Doodie	2	8	1	1	4	5
Turd	4	6	1	2	3	5
Pet waste	10	-	1	9	1	-
Jobbers	0	9	2	1	5	4
*Doggie droppings	1	-	-	-	-	-
*Shit	-	-	-	1	2	-

* Write in
November 2004



Reactions to Humorous Approach

Reactions are mixed to using a humorous approach to educate people about proper dog waste disposal

- It's not a very comfortable subject. Who wants to talk about dog poop?
- People may be more apt to listen if they could get a laugh out of it
- Humor can be subjective
- “If it is hazardous, then there should be science to back it up and they ought to present it in a serious way.” (Group1)
- “People like to be entertained.” (Group1)
- “A good way to get through the generations... Children will remember, older folks will appreciate.” (Group 2)
- “It's not so direct that you are offending somebody.” (Group 2)
- “I don't think there is anything humorous about getting those diseases... I think it should be addressed as a serious matter.” (Group 2)

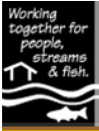
Reactions to Posters (1/2)

Several respondents in each group react negatively to the dog poop visuals in the posters, especially when the poop is the primary focus and not a secondary part of the picture.

- “Nobody wants to see dog poop.” (Group 1)
- “The stools in this one and the first one are a minor part of the picture. It’s not the man focus. Where it’s the chief focus it’s just offensive.” (Group 1)
- “I don’t like the emphasis... nasty looking.” (Group 2)

In general, respondents react more positively to posters that include pictures of dogs.

- “A picture of a dog and a person with a blue bag in their hand would say enough.” (Group 1)
- “I like the dog in it. I think it brings it home a little bit better.” (Group 2)



Reactions to Posters (2/2)

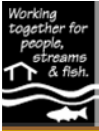
A couple of respondents agree the poetry poster would be good for schools or a vet's office.

- “If that’s going to be in the waiting room at the vet’s office, somebody will read it, but if it’s going to be on a poster in a park and you’re supposed to get the clue in the first five seconds as you walk by, no.” (Group 1)
- “That would be the perfect type of advertisement to go in these scholastic monthly magazines that kids get in elementary schools.” (Group 2)

One respondent is not sure everyone will know what opposable thumbs are – it’s not a quick connection.

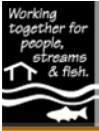


Recommendations



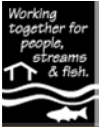
Recommendations

- Respondents do not embrace the recommended method to scoop, bag, and throw dog waste in the trash. Many believe there must be a better, more environmentally friendly method. There needs to be evidence or proof that composting and other methods used by respondents now are not as good as the recommended method.
 - Creates landfill issues
 - Seems like composting would be better
 - Garbage trucks won't pick up (perception among a few)
- There is an opportunity to leverage the trust relationship respondents have with their veterinarian to influence proper dog waste disposal.
 - “If my veterinarian were to say, “We have a serious problem in Snohomish County, this is something I would like you to read.’ I would absolutely read that... He’s the authority. I have confidence in him.” (Group1)



Recommendations

- Further testing should be done with quantitative and qualitative research methods to better understand the effectiveness of using humor to educate Snohomish County residents about proper pet waste disposal.
 - Additionally, further testing should be done to understand the balance of dog, owner, and poop visuals. The focus group discussions indicate that posters with poop as the primary visual can be a turn off.
- Respondents need to have specific proof and statistics to convince them that pet waste is a major contributor of water pollution compared to other pollution sources.
- Respondents find it most believable that there are nutrients, bacteria or by-products in dog waste that are harmful to streams and children.



Recommendations

- Key question areas to cover in the quantitative survey include:
 - How dogs typically spend their day, dog diet, health care, and the methods residents use to manage pet waste (regularly, occasionally, rarely/never use each method)
 - Reasons have for choosing to pick up, not pick up dog waste (select all that apply to respondent personally)
 - Awareness of causes of water pollution in Snohomish county streams, rivers, and lakes (unaided and aided; measure perceptions of relative degree of impact of each)
 - Degree of impact rating dog waste has on water quality, wildlife, children, and aquatic life, especially salmon (reaction to descriptions)
 - Interest rating in different programs that improve water quality in Snohomish County streams, rivers, and lakes (reaction to descriptions)
 - Believability of statements describing reasons to use/not use different pet waste disposal methods
 - Compelling ratings for list of motivator statements to use proper method