

Toilet Art Fact Sheet

For more fun toilet facts, find the decorated toilets throughout Hood River

- **The fecal bacteria, *E coli*, were detected at unsafe levels on lower Indian Creek by Columbia Riverkeeper volunteers in summer 2008.** Further testing located a leaking sewage pipe at the Hood River Valley High School which was promptly fixed. Another source is currently being investigated along the Indian Creek trail by the Columbia Gorge Community College by trained college students. Other local creeks being investigated for high levels of E coli are lower Whiskey Creek, and lower Phelps Creek.

What can you do to help? Volunteer to monitor for the fecal indicator *E coli*:
www.columbiariverkeeper.org



Tina de la Fuente sampling for *E coli* on Indian Creek.

- **Common sources of high fecal bacteria** in rivers are overflowing septic fields or sewage systems, and after a strong rain event fecal bacteria may be high for 1-3 afterwards as fecal matter from wildlife and pets is flushed downhill into rivers.

What can you do to help? Call the County Environmental Health department with questions about how to properly maintain your septic systems 541-387-6885. Pick up after your pets if they're playing near the water, especially near windsurfing and swimming areas. Keep a vegetated area 50 to 300 feet up from the creek to help filter pollutants from run-off.

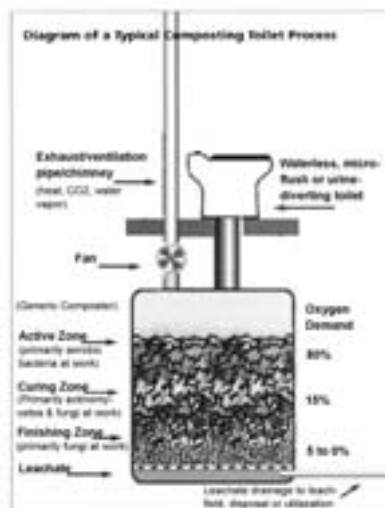
- It takes 3 to 3.5 gallons of water to flush a toilet, and if the average person visits the loo eight times a day¹. That is 24 gallons a day or 8,760 gallons a year per person².
 - There are 3,169 toilets connected to Hood River's sewer system, getting flushed on average, using 24 gallons a day. That equals 76,056 gallons of wastewater traveling to our treatment plant per day just from toilets. Add in waste water from showers, and sinks and the Hood River wastewater

treatment plant processes approximately 1 million gallons of wastewater per day. (Information obtained from the City of Hood River.)

- Low flow toilets reduce the amount of water flushed by 2 gallons³.

1. http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4390000/newsid_4394200/4394226.stm
2. (<http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/sq3.html>)
3. <http://www.toiletology.com/low-flow.shtml>

What can you do to help? Convert to low-flow toilets, or install a composting toilet which is now legal in Oregon. Call local Tod LeFevre with Common Energy LLC for help – 541-400- 0151. See diagram for how composting toilets work. And last but not least, “if it’s yellow let it mellow, if it’s brown flush it down.”



- Hood River Valley water comes from 3 springs located 15 miles SW of town on Mt. Hood. The springs give 5 million gallons a day and are stored in three reservoirs that can hold a total of 6 million gallons. About 15 miles of pipeline transports water from the reservoirs to your home. If you’re on a septic system, your waste drains into a field behind your house. If you’re connected to sewer, your waste travels to the Hood River Wastewater Treatment Plant down by “The Hook.” Solids are removed and disinfected water is discharged by a pipe into the Columbia River. Scientists have recently detected many personal care products, caffeine, pharmaceuticals and other emerging pollutants in the Columbia River which at present cannot be removed with our current treatment technology.

What can you do to help? Flush, shower, and brush with the river in mind! Do not flush non-essentials down the toilet – call Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality to learn how to properly dispose of old or expired pharmaceuticals 503-229-5696.

Learn more about toxics detected in the Columbia River and efforts to reduce them:

1. Columbia River Basin State of the River Report for Toxics: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/ecocomm.nsf/Columbia/Columbia>
2. Visit Columbia Riverkeeper: www.columbiariverkeeper.org

- **Stormwater is now considered one of the nations leading pathways for introducing toxics into rivers.** After a big rain event, water pours over roads, roofs, lawns and runs downhill with trash, small oil spills, lawn fertilizers and pesticides... and heads straight into Hood River. It is not treated at the Wastewater treatment plant first.

What can you do to help? Don't dump anything down your storm drains. Volunteer to paint an important message, "dump no waste, drains to river" on storm drains throughout Hood River. Contact Katie volunteer@columbiariverkeeper.org for details or to sign-up!



Storm drain stenciling event in Ellensburg, Washington at Central Washington University

