

# Putting the “You” in Communications and Public Involvement

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# Some truths in our business



Truth #1: The EEEEEUUUUGGGGHHH factor  
Truth #2: It all starts with us

Truth #3: Modern sewage treatment has done more to improve public health and the environment than any other development in history



# Our choices influence what comes out the end of our pipes

- Cleaning products
- Personal care products
- Pharmaceuticals
- Disposal practices (fats, oils, grease, using toilet as trash can)
- Water conservation practices
- Transportation choices



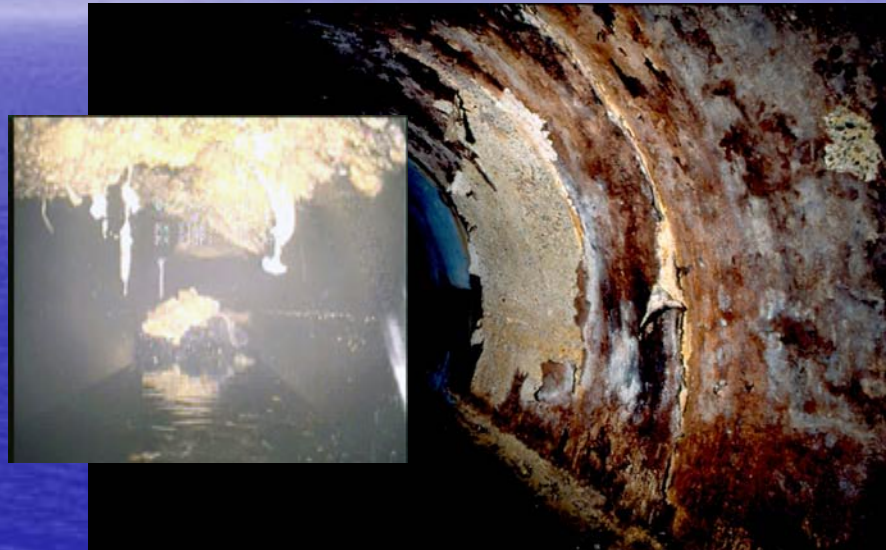
Scientists can  
measure  
post-holiday  
spice levels  
in waterways



# Effects of trash, grease, hair and chemicals in sewer systems

Trash, grease and hair clog up sewer pipes resulting in overflows

Chemicals corrode pipelines resulting in more groundwater entering the system and increased maintenance and replacement costs



# Effects of chemicals: medicines, personal and household products

~ 50% of pharmaceuticals we take enter the sewer system

Chemicals from shampoos, soaps, cleaners, detergents, make-up products, etc. enter the sewer system everyday ([www.skindeep.org](http://www.skindeep.org))

Treatment plants use natural, biological processes to treat water; not all chemicals are broken down and removed. Nothing disappears: what goes down our drains and toilets returns to our environment .

Biosolids and reclaimed water are two ways to harness the sun, soil and plant growth to break down these chemicals



# Who pays for wastewater services?

King County treats wastewater, maintains conveyance and treatment infrastructure and constructs new facilities to support our region's economy and growth

You pay for wastewater treatment every month through your water bill – not through taxes





# Everyday two decisions are made

**How much:** increased or inefficient water use along with population growth means billions of dollars are needed for the continual expansion and upgrading of water treatment infrastructure

**What is in it:** the more chemicals, trash, grease and hair in the system, the harder it is to efficiently, safely and cost-effectively manage, treat and recycle the water we use everyday

You and *only* you make these choices  
every time you use water



*After today, it doesn't just go away*

Drains, toilets and human bodies  
are **recycling bins** —  
wastewater treatment plants  
are **recycling centers** —

**NOTHING JUST DISAPPEARS**



Engaging the Public

Education starts with awareness,  
moves on to knowledge and then to  
the application of knowledge

Learning isn't finished until there is a  
commitment to use the knowledge

At any point in time, we may work on  
projects that focus on any one of the  
three stages

Marycile Olexer, *Kitsap Water Watchers*

# IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



Increasing Level of Public Impact 

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Public participation goal</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
<b>Promise to the public</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
<b>Example techniques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Fact sheets</li> <li>■ Web sites</li> <li>■ Open houses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public comment</li> <li>■ Focus groups</li> <li>■ Surveys</li> <li>■ Public meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Workshops</li> <li>■ Deliberative polling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Citizen advisory committees</li> <li>■ Consensus-building</li> <li>■ Participatory decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Citizen juries</li> <li>■ Ballots</li> <li>■ Delegated decision</li> </ul>

# Bring messages out to the community



*Children at Renton River Days learn to make green cleaning products (right)*

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*Bert the Salmon makes an appearance in the Issaquah Salmon Days Parade (left)*

# Community Partnerships Work!



*Carnation residents kept up-to-date on the progress of their new sewage treatment facilities at the Carnation Farmer's Market*

*The Burke Museum and Seattle's Discovery Park join King County to host Archaeology Day at West Point Treatment Plant*



# Make materials fun, relevant and easy to get the point

**STOP** THESE ITEMS BELONG IN THE TRASH CAN **STOP**

**IN THE BATHROOM:  
think trash  
not toilets**

Flushing the wrong thing down the toilet damages your household plumbing, your environment and the wastewater treatment system. If it isn't biodegradable, put it in the trash instead of the toilet.



**Band-aids & bandage wrappers**

**Cleaning wipes**

**Condoms**

**Cotton balls, swabs & pads**

**Dental floss & teeth whitening strips**

**Disposable diapers, nursing pads & baby wipes**

**Facial wipes**

**Hair**

**Kitty litter**

**Expired & unused prescription or over-the-counter medications.  
(Return these to your pharmacy or place in the trash can.)**

**Mini & maxi-pads**

**Tampons & applicators**

*If it isn't biodegradable, put it in the trash can, not the toilet, or recycle it.*



*King County Wastewater Treatment Division  
Protecting public health and the environment*



# Make signage

We're using water wisely  
by irrigating with  
reclaimed water



Please don't drink the water



that tells  
**YOUR** story

**Reclaimed Water**  
Water Conservation Project

**DO NOT  
DRINK**



Invite people in —  
there is power in  
touring facilities



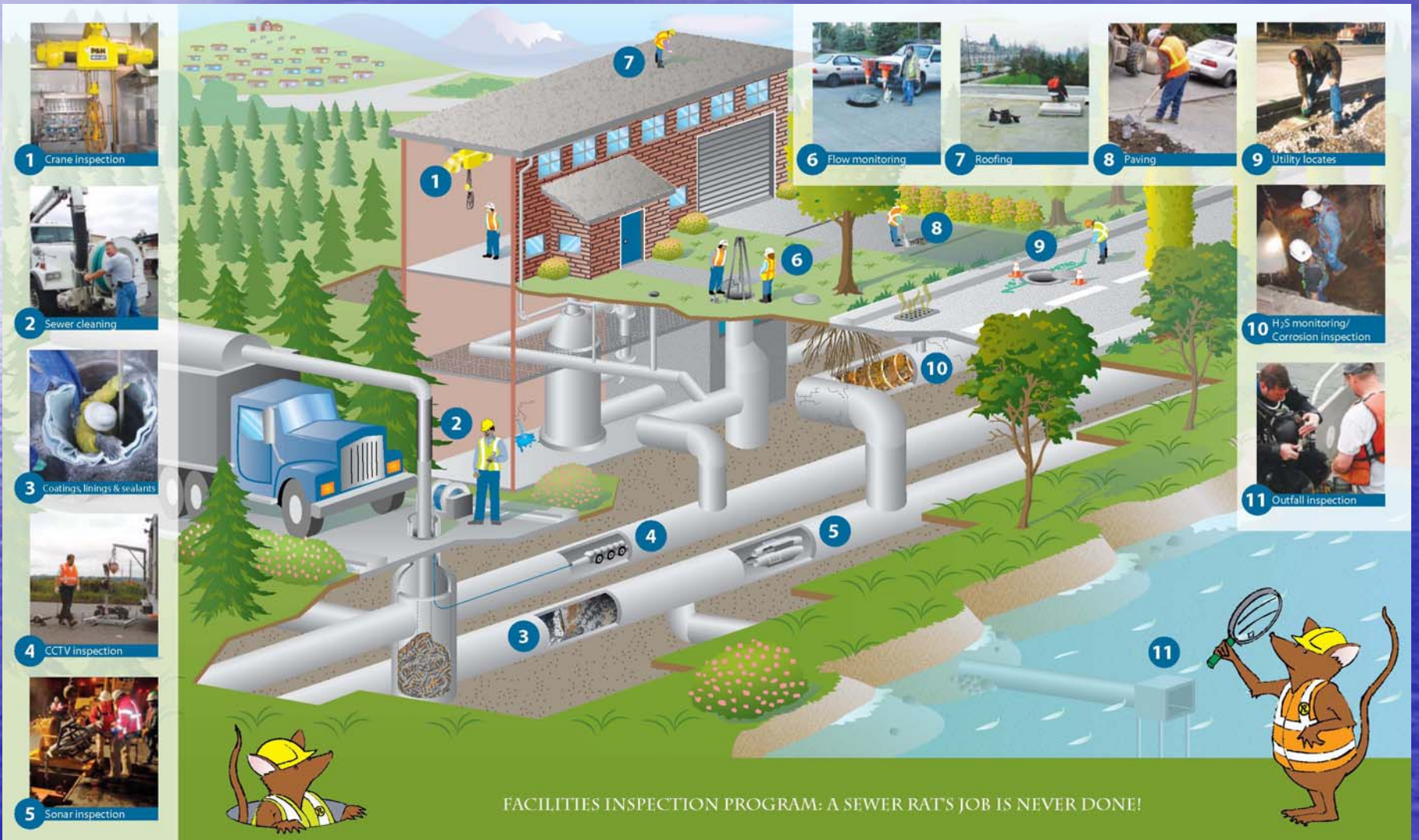
# Open the door to an Open House



The public is invited to annual open houses, as well as "drop in" days, at each of our treatment plants



# Protecting the environment 24 hours a day, every day



# Construction Projects



Who is your audience?

What do they need from you?

(schedule, reason for project, what they can expect, how to get in touch with you)

What do you need from them?



# Different “publics” for different projects

- Regional plants
- Local treatment plants
- Pump station upgrades
- Infrastructure maintenance, repair and upgrades
- Combined sewer overflow (CSO) and infiltration/inflow (I/I) control programs



# Mission of the King County Wastewater Treatment Division



Create  
resources  
from  
wastewater

# Emerging issues--PCPs, EDCS, Microconstituents

What is still in the reclaimed water  
or biosolids?

Is it safe?



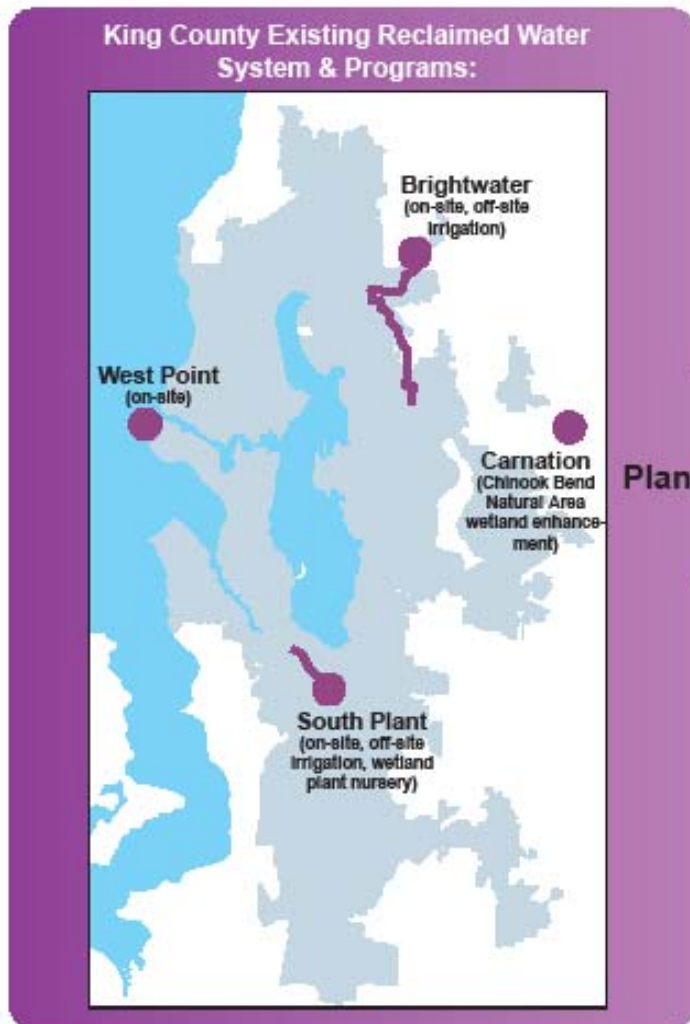
# Demonstration and research

Demonstration gardens and research projects are underway to show how reclaimed water can be used safely for irrigation



# Reclaimed Water: Where Do We Go From Here?

King County Wastewater Treatment Division's  
Draft Reclaimed Water Comprehensive Planning Process



Last updated on: 4/4/08

## Planning for the Future: Serving Potential Uses



Additional  
Wetlands  
Enhancement



Ground Water  
Recharge



Stream Flow  
Augmentation



Additional  
Industrial Uses



Additional  
Irrigation Uses

# More information:

- King County Wastewater Treatment Division  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/wtd.aspx>
- Liquid Assets- information, video, curriculum on water infrastructure  
<http://liquidassets.psu.edu/>

For King County Wastewater Treatment Division facility tours, general education and information

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/wtd/Education.aspx> or contact Casey Plank, 206-263-6028, [casey.plank@kingcounty.gov](mailto:casey.plank@kingcounty.gov)

Jo Sullivan, 206-296-8361, [jo.sullivan@kingcounty.gov](mailto:jo.sullivan@kingcounty.gov)

*The Big Necessity: The Unmentionable World of Human Waste and Why it Matters*, Rose George