

BEST PRACTICES



Work-Life Balance at Yauger Park

Did you know that Yauger Park is not only a great place to play, it's also a critical part of Olympia's stormwater management system? The Yauger Park Regional Stormwater Complex is designed to store, channel, and filter runoff from 700 acres of surrounding land. These key functions work to reduce pollution in our local waterways and flooding in Olympia's streets. The 29-acre stormwater facility was constructed in 1977 when the Capital Mall was built. In 2010, the wet pond was deepened and enlarged to create more stormwater storage capacity and add water quality treatment.

The Urban Water Cycle

Before Yauger stormwater facility was built, rainstorms caused nearby roads to flood frequently. This was due to changes in land cover that occurred over time. As Olympia's West Side grew, trees and plants were removed and more hard, impervious surfaces covered the landscape. Impervious surfaces, like roads, parking lots and roofs played a big part in the changes to the natural water cycle. Rain no longer soaked into the ground as it used to and stormwater runoff became a problem, causing flooding.

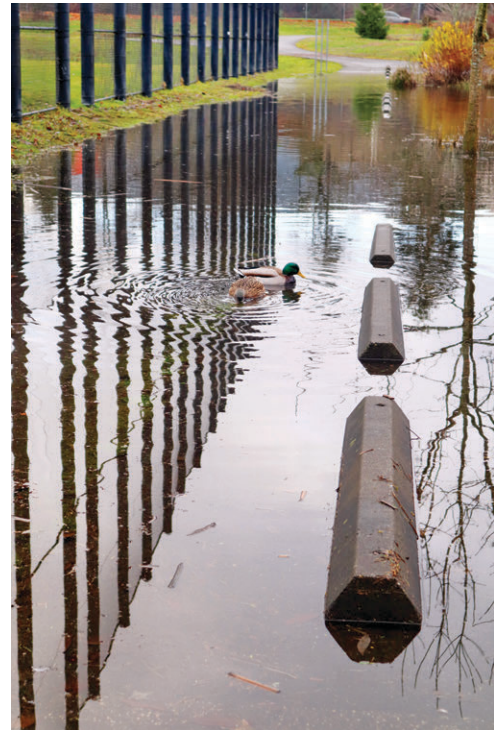
As cities grow and develop, stormwater management also needs to grow. During an average year, Olympia receives 51 inches of rainfall. Due to the 3,096 acres of impervious surface, this much rain **creates over 4 billion gallons of stormwater annually!** Yauger Park is one of five regional stormwater facilities in Olympia designed to tackle localized flooding and provide cleaner water for salmon, wildlife and people to enjoy.

Letting the Rain Soak In

When rain or snow falls on undisturbed natural areas, it infiltrates or soaks into the ground. Water is held in the ground for months or years and is slowly released into local waterways and groundwater. This is part of the natural water cycle that helps maintain water levels in streams, rivers and wetlands during the dry summer and autumn months. Abundant, cool, clean water is essential to the survival of salmon and other aquatic species. It also helps recharge aquifers that supply Olympia's drinking water.

When it rains hard in Olympia, water pours from surrounding storm drains into Yauger Park. It's clouded with sediment and pollution that gets picked-up along the way. The low impact development features at Yauger are designed to mimic the natural water cycle found in nature by absorbing and filtering stormwater runoff:

- **Permeable and porous parking lots** soak up rain and help filter out heavy metals, oils, and gasoline from vehicles.



Yauger Park is designed to flood, it's parking lots slowly infiltrate stormwater.

- **Rain gardens** are designed to filter, store and infiltrate stormwater runoff. There are eight rain gardens scattered throughout the Yauger Park parking lot.
- **Series of Bioswales** have been installed that pre-clean stormwater coming from storm drain pipes.
- **Concrete weirs** were designed to slow the flow of stormwater, creating pools for sediment to settle out. obble bars below the weirs also help to prevent erosion.
- **The Pond** is designed to hold and filter runoff and provide urban wildlife habitat. It can hold up to 27 million gallons of water. That's enough to fill 36 Olympic swimming pools! The water is slowly released to Black Lake Meadows, then through Percival Creek and ultimately into Budd Inlet.
- **Native plants** help to filter stormwater in the pond, rain gardens and bioswales.



Added Benefits

The primary job of Yauger Park's stormwater features are to help control flooding and treat stormwater runoff. But it also has an additional benefit—like providing habitat for wildlife. The plants at Yauger were chosen to support the site's water detention and treatment functions but they also provide beauty and needed habitat for wildlife. The pond, rain gardens and bioswales bring a reliable source of water, protective native vegetation and abundant food (leaves, seeds, and berries), which attracts birds, amphibians and insects.

Designed to Flood

Even with its water-helping features, Yauger Park is not big enough to manage all of the stormwater runoff it receives—there is just too much impervious surface in the surrounding area. That is why the park is designed to flood. During exceptionally high water events, standing water can fill the park all the way to its northern boundary. City crews monitor the water levels and release the excess water in a controlled manner, minimizing flooding downstream.

Next time there is a heavy rainfall you might think about visiting Yauger Park and see for yourself all the work it is doing to protect our local waterways and neighborhoods!

Coming Soon

The City of Olympia will begin developing informative signs for the stormwater features at Yauger Park later this year. If you are interested in helping us tell Yauger Park's stormwater story by providing input and feedback on the new signs, please contact Susan McCleary by email at smccleary@ci.olympia.wa.us or by calling 360-570-3794.

For more information on the urban water cycle, visit wetsciencecenter.org/aboutwater/urban-water-cycle-story.

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