Olympic Climate Action Special Program

Rainwater Collection 101

Monday, February 10, 2025, 6:30-8:00 p.m. via Zoom

This free presentation will last about an hour, with time for questions afterward. Register to receive the Zoom link.

The Olympic Peninsula is renowned for abundant rainfall. But the majority of rain falls from October to April, leaving summers dry. Drought by late summer is not uncommon, leaving fish, farmers, gardeners and communities with water woes. Our presenter, CJ Huxford, is the owner of Northwest Rain Solutions, a Bellingham-based company with 16 years of experience in rainwater harvesting and stormwater management in western Washington. The program is sponsored by Olympic Climate Action, a grass-roots group seeking a safe, prosperous, sustainable future for Olympic Peninsula residents by addressing the threat of climate change.

In the western U.S. many areas depend on mountain snowpack for their water supply. As the climate warms, mountain precipitation often falls as rain rather than snow. That contributes to flooding and means less snowpack for slow release during dry summers. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions should slow this impact, but in the meantime, rainwater collection can help us adapt to water supply changes.

“People have been doing this for centuries,” says Tim Pope, former president of the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association, “and in places where stormwater is an issue, if you put it in a tank to store, it’s not stormwater anymore, it’s a resource.”



A few weeks of winter rain on a small garden shed fills this 1,100-gallon tank. Photo by Janis Burger

Even in the rainshadow around Sequim and Port Angeles, a simple system can collect thousands of gallons of water, taking the pressure off wells or municipal systems, and saving money where water is metered. One inch of rainfall per 1,000 square feet of roof will yield approximately 623 gallons of water.

CJ earned a bachelors degree in Planning and Environmental Policy from Western Washington University. He is working with Bellingham schools on sustainability ranging from rainwater collection and water re-use to energy and waste reduction. He has researched reducing the impacts of disasters on electricity and water infrastructure in Washington, San Diego, CA, and Japan. CJ has also worked with Whatcom County on Low Impact Development methods, including on-site rainwater harvesting and landscaping for stormwater management. CJ is an elected board member of the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association (ARCSA).

Threatened water supply is just one of the many climate change impacts affecting people around the world and right here at home. With our glaciers disappearing, ocean chemistry changing, and extreme weather events like floods, droughts and heat domes becoming routine news, climate change is already leaving its destructive imprint on our region and the planet. To learn more about Olympic Climate Action and its efforts to address this challenge, visit our website at olyclimate.org.