



The Coastal Program In Puget Sound

Caring for Our Coastal Habitats

Overview

The Coastal Program in Puget Sound is one of 22 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Programs established to conserve coastal habitat to support fish, wildlife, and plants across the United States. The Puget Sound Coastal Program serves 12 counties in Puget Sound with a population of approximately 3.8 million people. Additionally, we serve 5 counties along the Washington coast with 157 miles of shoreline.

The health of Puget Sound is vital to the region's economy, tourism, quality of life and recreational, commercial and subsistence fisheries. Washington State leads the nation in the production of farmed bivalve shellfish, with approximately \$77 million in sales per year. Puget Sound is home to many Native American tribes who are dependent upon fisheries and other natural resources. Community members place high cultural values on the area's natural resources.

Unique Habitats

Puget Sound is designated an Estuary of National Significance, and is the second largest estuary in the United States. The Sound includes:

- 2,500 miles of shoreline,
- 2,800 square miles of inland marine waters, and
- 10 major watersheds that provide freshwater flow input.

Coastal Program Accomplishments

FROM 2000-2009	Upcoming in FY 2010
Restored <ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ 17,625 acres of coastal wetland and upland habitats➢ 163 miles of coastal shoreline or streamside habitat	Restore <ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ 9 new Partnership agreements➢ 572 acres of coastal wetland and upland habitat➢ 1.1 miles of coastal shoreline or streamside habitat
Protected <ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ 14,763 acres of coastal wetland and upland habitat	Protect <ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ 2,335 acres of coastal habitat

Puget Sound is the southern part of the Salish Sea, which we share with Canada. We promote cross-border coordination, research and information sharing.



Totten Inlet – Example Coastal Embayment

Puget Sound includes productive nearshore and deepwater habitats. Beaches, large and small river deltas, coastal embayments, mudflats, bluffs, kelp and eelgrass beds, salt marshes, and estuaries provide a diversity of habitat types. The geology, climate and nutrient-rich waters of Puget Sound provide habitat for 200+ species of fish, 26 marine mammals,

100 species of seabirds, and thousands of marine invertebrates and plants.

Threats

Population Growth and Urbanization
The human population of the basin is expected to increase by 1.4M people by 2020. Impacts of increasing growth and urbanization have resulted in:

- the loss of over 90% of tidal freshwater and estuarine wetlands in the greater Puget Sound Basin;
- marine bird populations declines of 57-96% in the last 20 years; and
- declines in bull trout, salmon, orca and rockfish populations, and subsequent listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Non-Native Invasive Species

Fish, wildlife, and plants are threatened by non-native species. Non-native plants and animals that pose a threat to ecosystem sustainability include: spartina, knotweed, European Green and Chinese mitten crabs, tunicates, and

nutria. Emerging threats include New Zealand mud snail and zebra mussels. USFWS works with partners to address these issues, and participates on the Washington Invasive Species Council.

These threats have contributed to the loss and degradation of habitat and declines in fish, wildlife and plants.

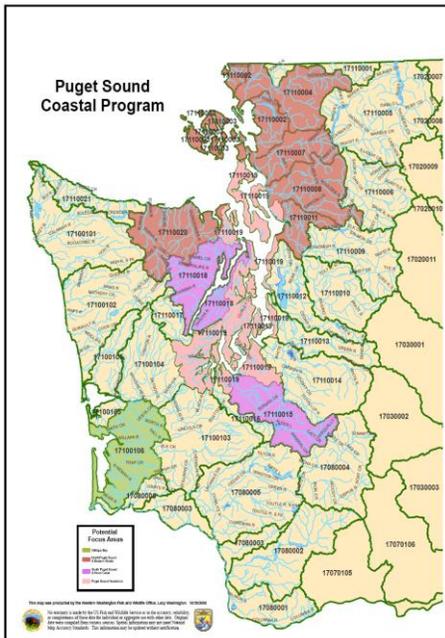
Priorities

In Washington, we collaborated with Federal, State, tribal, and local partners to identify current program focus areas including watersheds and nearshore habitats in:

- North Puget Sound and the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca,
- South Puget Sound and Hood Canal, and
- Willapa Bay.

In these focus areas, we and our partners: 1) develop and implement restoration and protection projects; 2) evaluate and address the threats to fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats; and, 3) support public education to improve stewardship of coastal resources.

Focus Areas in Washington



Partnerships

Several Coastal Program partnership successes are highlighted below.

Derelict Fishing Gear Removal

Puget Sound supports strong commercial and recreational fisheries. Due to mechanical failure, bad weather or human error, derelict fishing gear has been accumulating. Abandoned or lost nets, fishing lines and crab or shrimp pots can wound or kill numerous marine fish, shellfish, birds and mammals. The USFWS works with the Northwest Straits Foundation to remove derelict fishing gear from deepwater habitats in northern Puget Sound. The partnership supports ongoing surveys and derelict gear removal, and has trained multiple groups of divers in appropriate removal techniques, a skill that is now being used in other areas of the United States.

Dead Bird Removed From Derelict Net



NW Straits Commission Photo

Coastal Wetland Conservation

The USFWS National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program was established by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act of 1990. Under this program, coastal states compete for matching grants to acquire or restore coastal wetlands. Funding for the program comes from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels. Significant conservation benefits have been achieved through strong partnerships between Coastal Program staff, state agencies, and other partners. Since 1991 these partnerships have brought over \$52 million in federal funding to Washington State. These monies were used to conserve and restore over 27,000 acres of priority coastal

wetland habitat in Washington. State and local partners have provided over \$18 million in matching funds. In the future, emerging nearshore habitat information from the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project will provide more strategic direction for this program. Mapping of project sites is underway and a future assessment of the potential impacts from climate change is planned.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP)

PSNERP is led by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and staff from the USFWS Coastal Program. A feasibility study to identify significant ecosystem problems in the Puget Sound basin is ongoing, with the goal of preserving and restoring the health of the Sound's nearshore habitats. The project is one of the largest habitat conservation and restoration efforts undertaken in the United States, and is a cooperative effort among government, tribes, industries, and environmental organizations.

Puget Sound Partnership

The *Puget Sound Action Agenda* released in December 2008, is a plan for protecting and restoring the Puget Sound Ecosystem by 2020. USFWS Coastal Program staff actively participate in the Federal Caucus, and the Ecosystem Coordination Board. We work with our partners to identify and implement restoration actions that support the goals and objectives stated in the Action Agenda.

For More Information

For more information about the Coastal Program in Puget Sound, contact the Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration, Program Manager, Washington Fish and Wildlife Office at (360) 753-9440 or visit us on the internet at <http://www.fws.gov/coastal/>