



2023 State of the Sound

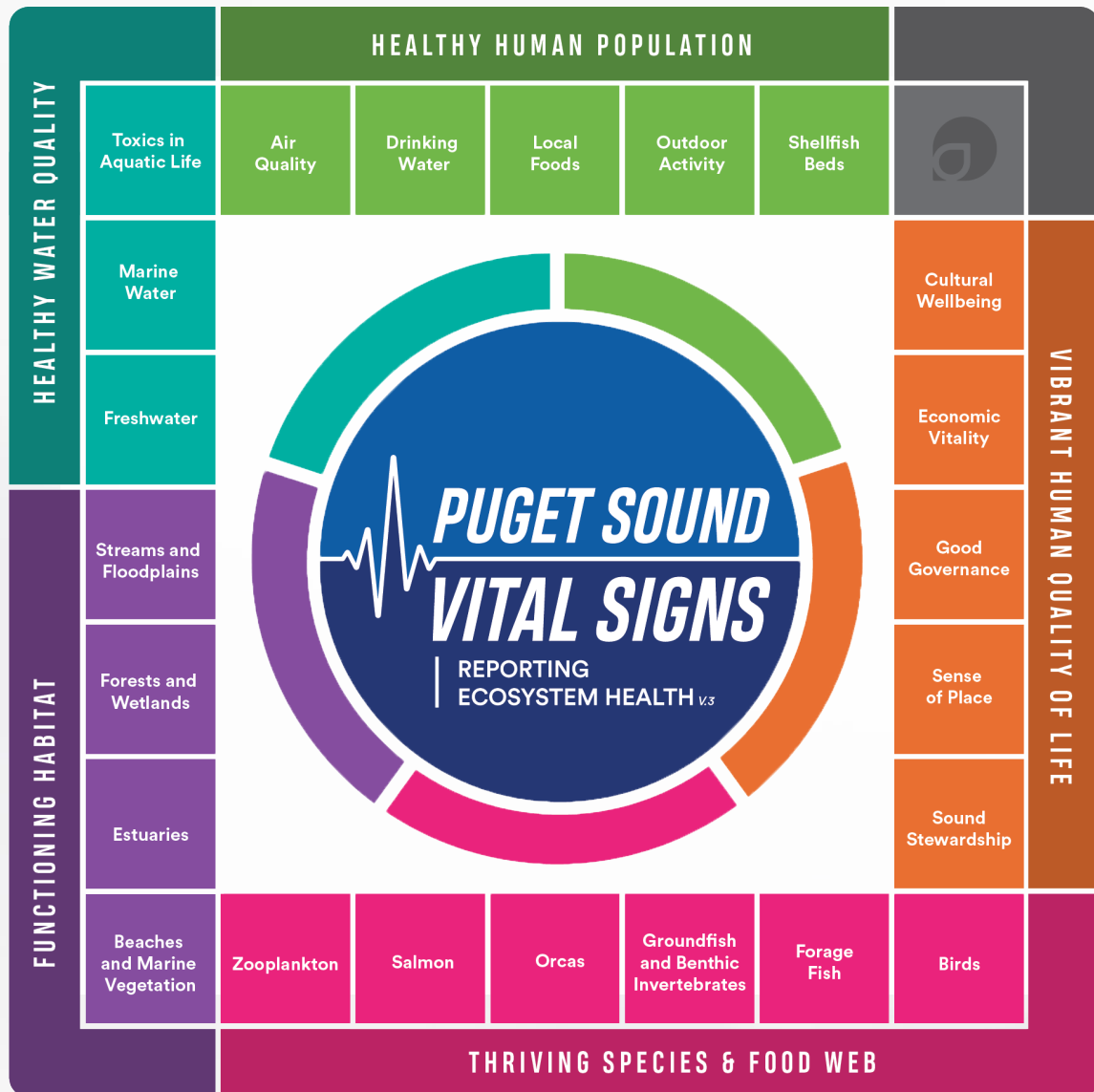
Top level messages from the report

1. The Puget Sound ecosystem is not doing well, but with collective effort, we can restore it to health and make sure it can adapt to climate change and other pressures.
2. Many of the indicators we use to gauge the health of the Puget Sound ecosystem are not making progress toward recovery. Some indicators show local declines, which means we need to devote attention to those areas to prevent the declines from getting worse.

2023 State of the Sound

Key messages from the report

3. However, we have seen big changes in the last two years that make us optimistic. New funding from the federal government and the state gives our region a chance to accomplish major recovery goals. Policy changes, including the passage of key parts of the PUGET SOS Act, make it easier for partners across the Sound to work together.
4. We need to take advantage of this moment to set ourselves on the right course for recovery, to restore this beautiful place for ourselves and future generations.



Summary



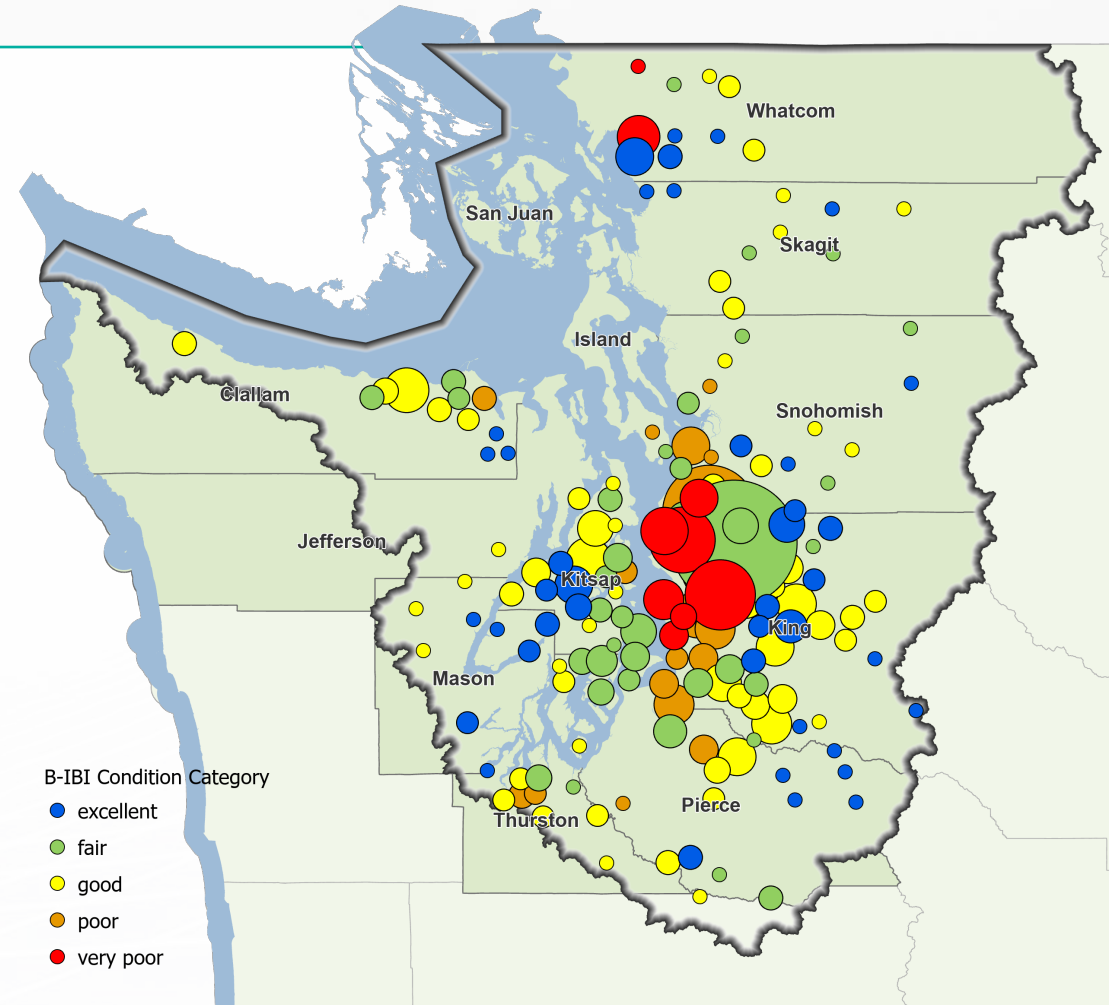
More indicators will be developed over time. We will work with recovery partners to compile and report data in the future.

Freshwater Quality

Freshwater quality is mixed across Puget Sound; however, over time Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (B-IBI) scores have generally improved or remained stable.

GETTING
BETTER

- While development has increased in the region, stream health (as measured by the diversity and abundance of insects and other invertebrates) has improved at 22% of sites and declined at only 2% of sites.

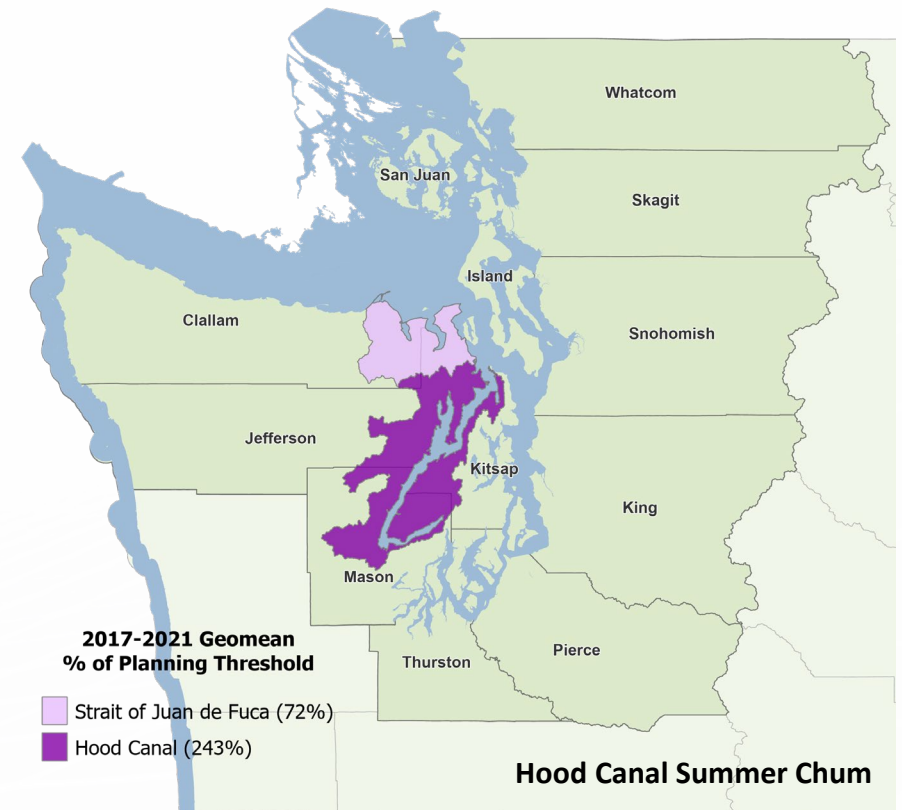


Summer Chum Salmon

Hood Canal summer chum salmon have increased since ESA listing in 1999.



- This good news reflects decades of targeted actions and investments and points to a possible breakthrough for the recovery of this Threatened species.

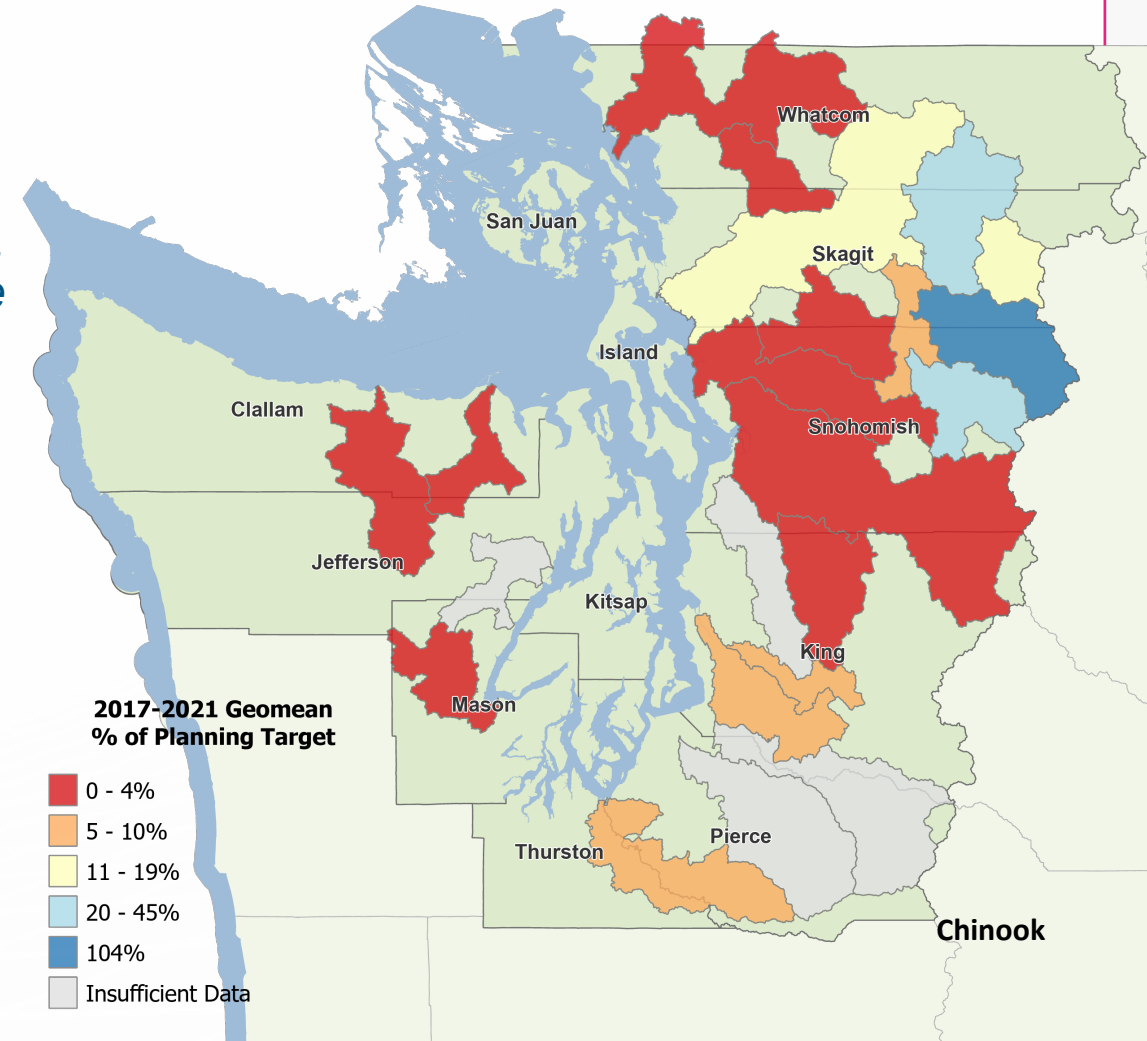


Chinook Salmon

Chinook salmon and Puget Sound steelhead are stable, but population numbers are far too low, and we see little to no sign of recovery for these Threatened species.

NO
TREND

- We are challenged to provide the conditions necessary to sustain populations, including sufficient functional habitat, clean water free of contaminants, and robust prey resources.



Number of Southern Resident Killer Whales

Southern Resident killer whales are a unique population of orcas that ranges in the Salish Sea and along the West Coast of the U.S. and Canada. They range in three pods known as J, K and L from California to Alaska in pursuit of fish, primarily adult Pacific salmon.



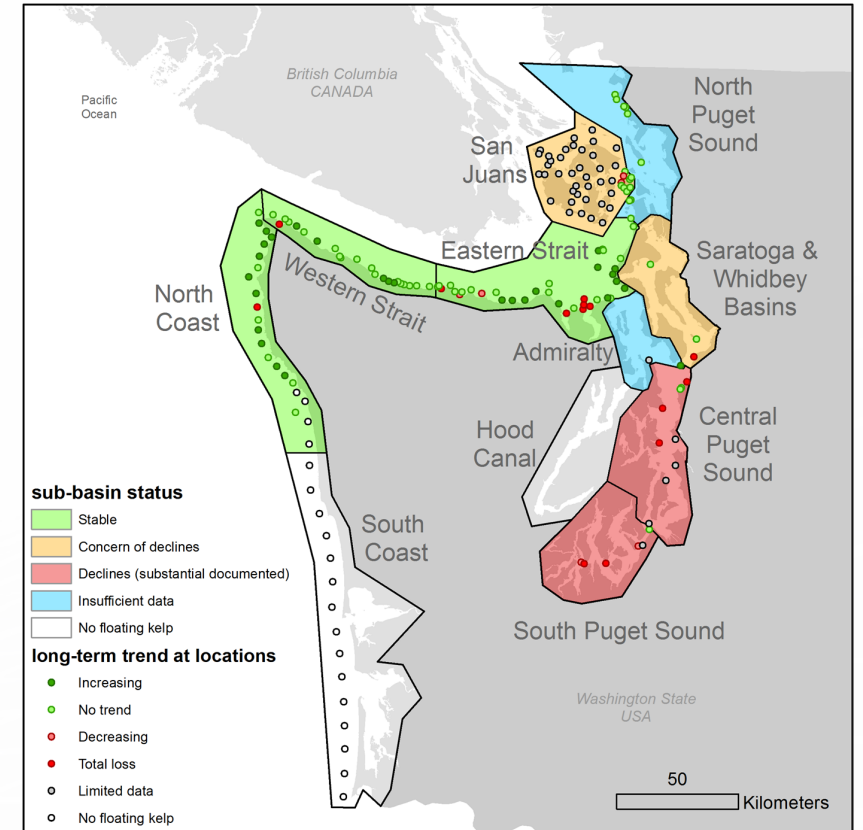
- **Status:** The July 2023 census led by the Center for Whale Research reported 75 whales, which reflects two new calves born in 2023. The number is up from 73 whales last year, but down from the peak of 98 whales in 1995.

Marine Vegetation

The floating kelp bed indicator weaves together multiple ways of knowing to report on status and trends over time.



- We see dramatic losses in kelp canopy in some areas while other areas appear stable. Causes are site specific and include both human and natural factors, but increasing water temperatures and climate change are major concerns.

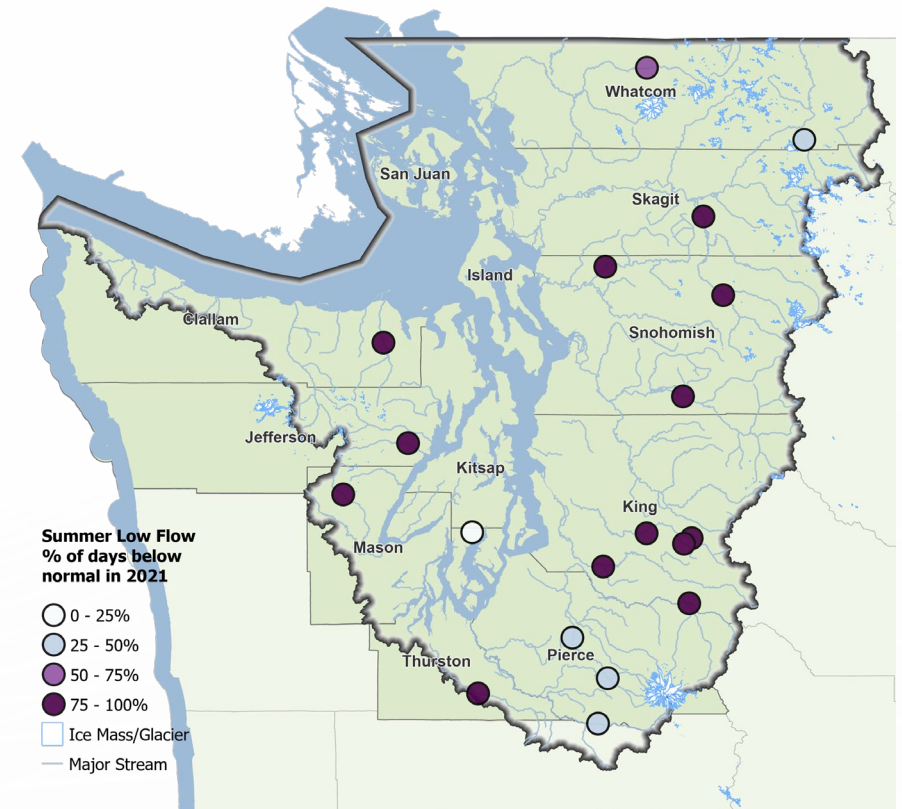


Stream flows

The occurrence of below normal summer flows is increasing in unregulated streams and rivers across Puget Sound relative to a 50-year baseline.



- Climate change is exacerbating seasonal anomalies in streamflows. With rising snow elevations and less snowpack, summer low flows are becoming lower and longer lasting throughout the region.



Sustained Funding for Puget Sound Recovery

Federal planning, funding and implementation

The Partnership coordinates awareness raising about the need for sustained federal funding for Puget Sound recovery, including working with partners to organize *Puget Sound Day on the Hill*.

Between November 2021 and December 2022, several critical pieces of federal legislation were enacted:

- Promoting United Government Efforts To Save Our Sound, “PUGET SOS” (part of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 7776) – Dec 2022
 - creates a Puget Sound National Program Office within the EPA
 - establishes Puget Sound Federal Leadership Task Force
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) – Nov 2021
- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) – Aug 2022
- Consolidated Appropriations Act (H.R.2617) – Dec 2022

Federal Leadership Task Force – Action Plan

Progress

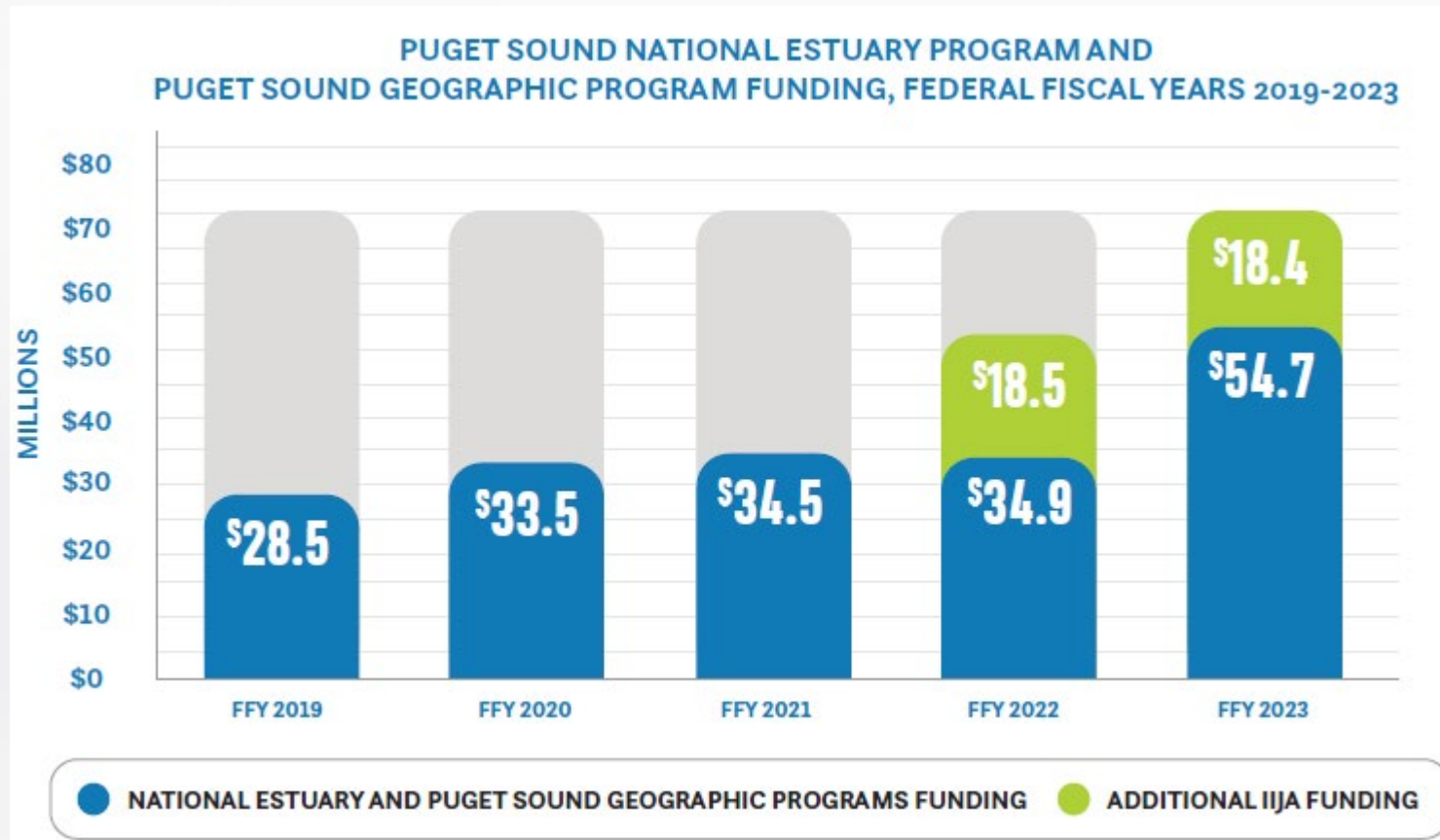
- Fed. agencies mobilized to put BIL funds to work
- Permitting/compliance reducing backlogs, facilitating action
- Farm Services, JBLM joined FLTF
- EPA addressing 6ppd, stormwater pollution

Recommendations

- Increase permit-assisted restoration projects
- Staffing/creative policy fixes for integrated floodplain management
- Coordinate fed.-state funding + other efforts on riparian habitat
- Prioritize implementation of stormwater and transportation goals
- Address eligibility/cost share barriers to expedite fish passage projects
- Fund, implement entire Puget Sound federal action plan

Federal planning, funding and implementation

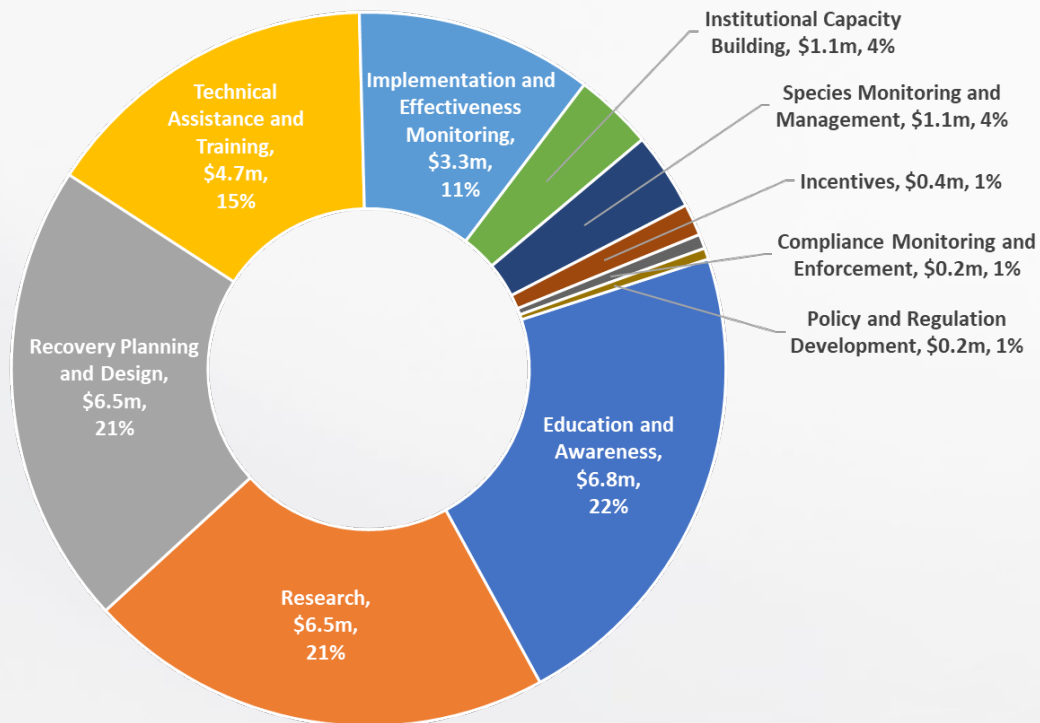
We are already seeing the effects of this suite of federal legislation in supporting Action Agenda implementation



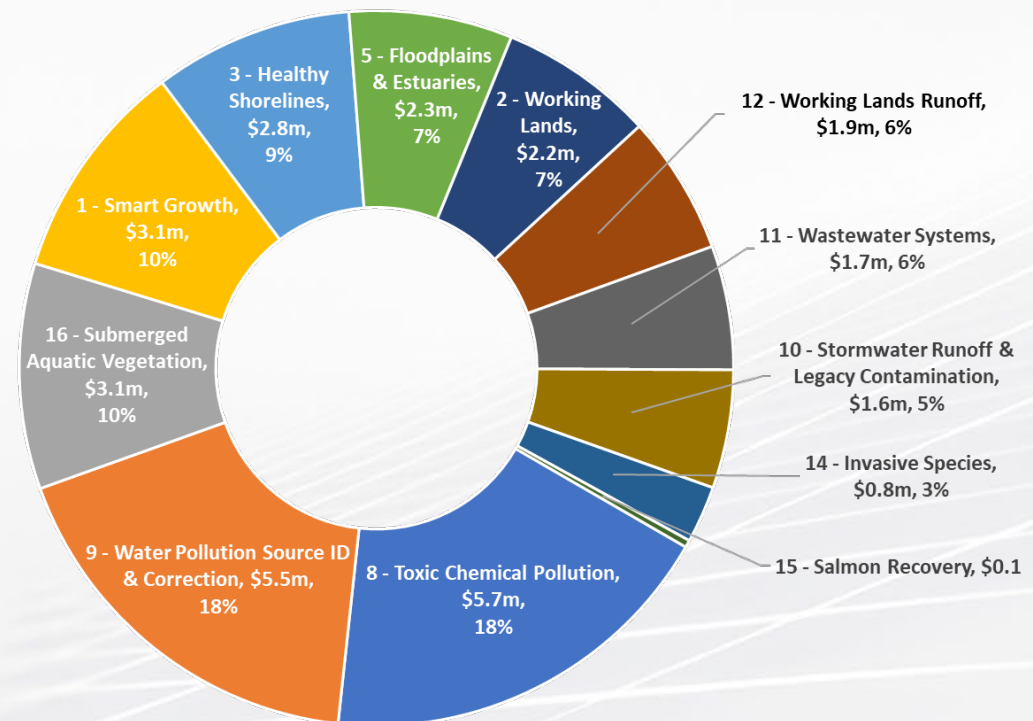
Federal planning, funding and implementation

Strategic Initiative Lead 2.0 projects (Habitat, Shellfish & Stormwater SILs)

Projects by primary type of activity



Projects by primary Action Agenda strategy



Strategically directing federal funding

- Partnership's Strategic Funding Team
 - Accelerate and scale the implementation of Puget Sound recovery
 - Support the recovery community to plan and act across sectors and geographies
 - Help partners respond to rapid funding availability so that projects can be scaled up quickly and successfully
 - Puget Sound Recovery Acceleration Tool (PS RAFT)
 - Beginning to strategize how to align restoration and transportation

**Advocating for state agency
budget and policy priorities
and budget request ranking**

Advocating for state policy priorities



Work with partners to develop/refine ideas



Set legislative priorities



Communicate with Legislators

Bill #	Short Title	House	
		Passed comm	Passed fiscal
HB 1181 (Duerr) SB 5203 (Lovelett)	Climate change / GMA (Gov)	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
HB 1735 (Lekanoff)	Net ecological gain	✓	X
HB 1215 (Chapman) SB 5266 (Shewmake)	Protect and restore riparian areas (Gov)	X	
HB 1378 (Reeves) SB 5433 (Muzall)	Derelict aquatic structures (DNR)	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
SB 5104 (Salomon)	Monitor Puget Sound shorelines	✓	✓

Track and report on progress and outcomes

STRATEGY 1

Smart Growth

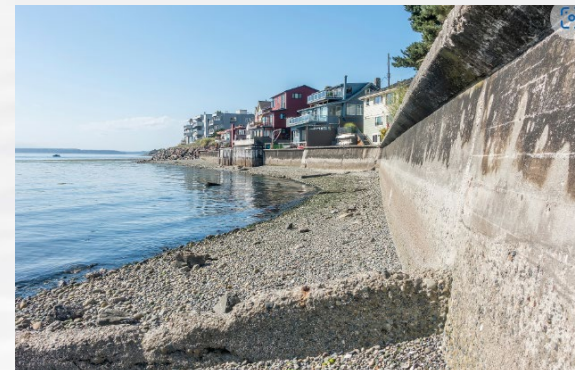


HB 1181 – incorporating climate change into land use plans, **PASSED**

HB 1735 – net ecological gain, **DID NOT PASS**

STRATEGY 3

Healthy Shorelines



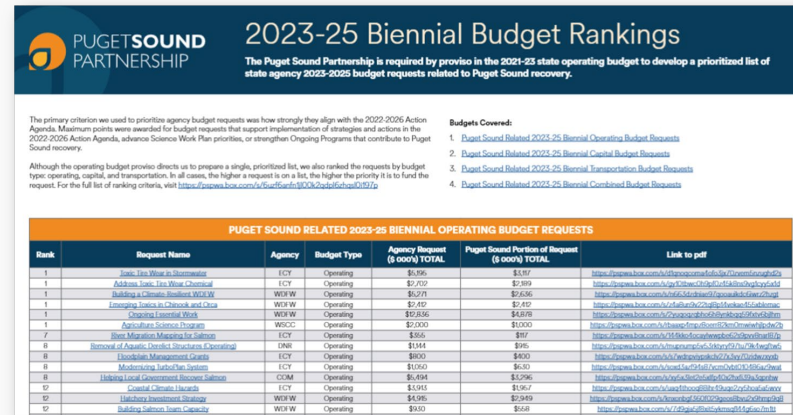
SB 5433 – Derelict Structure Removal Program, **PASSED**

SB 5104 – Baseline Survey of Puget Sound Marine Shoreline Habitat, **PASSED**

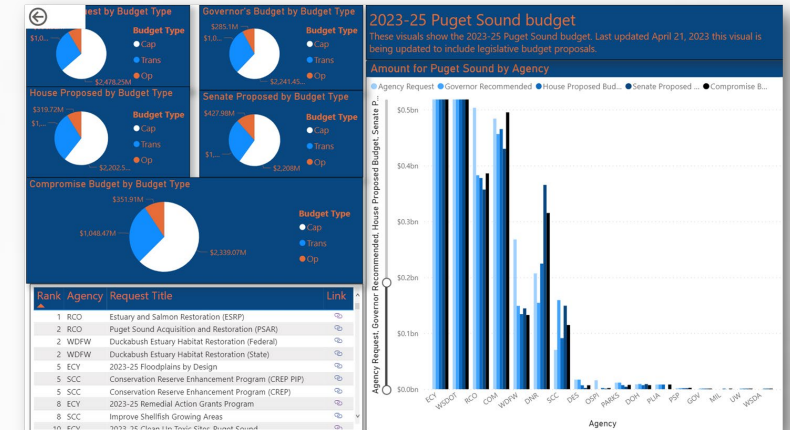
Ensuring a strong "Puget Sound budget"



Work with partners to develop/refine ideas



Rank Puget Sound-related budget requests to inform Governor and Legislative budgets



Track and report on progress and outcomes

BIENNIAL BUDGET COMPARISON (RANKED REQUESTS)	EST PUGET SOUND BUDGET 2021-23 (\$ MILLIONS)	EST PUGET SOUND BUDGET 2023-25 (\$ MILLIONS)
Capital	661	1,201
Operating	20	147
Transportation	662	943
TOTAL	1,344	2,292

2023-25 Budget Outcome

- Historic investment levels in some (not all) important capital grant programs that support ecosystem and salmon recovery.
- \$943 million for WSDOT fish-barrier removal on state highways and roads in Puget Sound
- \$50m in new capital funding for riparian restoration grant programs

**Local and regional forums
to support implementation**

Purpose of Local Forums

1. Expand local decision-maker engagement with the Puget Sound recovery community
2. Discuss local priorities and determine how the Ecosystem Coordination Board or Leadership Council can support action to address the gaps and barriers related to those priorities
3. Discuss regional priorities and determine how they might be supported at the local level



Accelerate ecosystem recovery implementation at the local level

Local Forum Outcomes

- ✓ Impacting grant system alignment
- ✓ Influencing permitting policy to facilitate implementation of habitat restoration projects
- ✓ Integrating salmon and ecosystem recovery priorities into local jurisdiction planning

Acceleration forums – Leadership Council

- Overall purpose of acceleration forums: celebrate progress and/or remove barriers to progress toward Puget Sound recovery
- Sound Safe Infrastructure acceleration forums (March, June 2023)
 - Identify mechanisms to encourage the influx of transportation dollars to be used to create transportation projects with strong environmental and human wellbeing benefits



Putting It All Together - Example of Coordinating Efforts



Smart Growth

ECB Land Use subcommittee

Identify tools to engage counties undergoing comprehensive plan updates

- ➡ WDFW's checklists and outreach efforts
- ➡ Strategic Initiative Leads Land Use pods
- ➡ Provide input during development of Sound Choices checklist
- ➡ Convene panel discussion with county planners to identify how ECB and PS recovery system can support
- ➡ Bold land use planning workshop



Sound Safe Infrastructure

- Determining better coordination opportunities at the state level
- Identify, coordinate funding efforts to support Sound Safe Infrastructure goals
- Coordinate with Salmon Recovery Council Accelerating Progress subcommittee vis a vis Sound Safe Infrastructure goals
- Advocate for additional support, including direct Federal Highways funding, changes to competitive grants evaluation criteria

Federal planning, funding and implementation

National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program (Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage Program, AOP) – Federal Highway Administration

- Created by the IIJA
- Annual competitive fish passage restoration grant
- Year one grants (FY 2022) awarded \$45 million to 14 different fish barrier removal projects located in Puget Sound.



Puget Sound Nearshore Estuary Restoration Project (PSNERP) Duckabush Estuary Restoration

Local (HCSEG), State (WDFW, WSDOT), Tribal, and Federal (ACOE) implementation partners

Partnership coordinating support:

Action Agenda call out
and program target to
measure success

State capital budget
investment

Federal cost share policy
change

Federal budget investment

Acceleration forum with LC



Credit: DFW

6PPD and Stormwater Management

Private, Local, State (ECY, DFW, WSDOT, DOH), Tribal, and Federal (EPA) implementation partners

Partnership coordinating support:

Federal task force and state interagency work groups

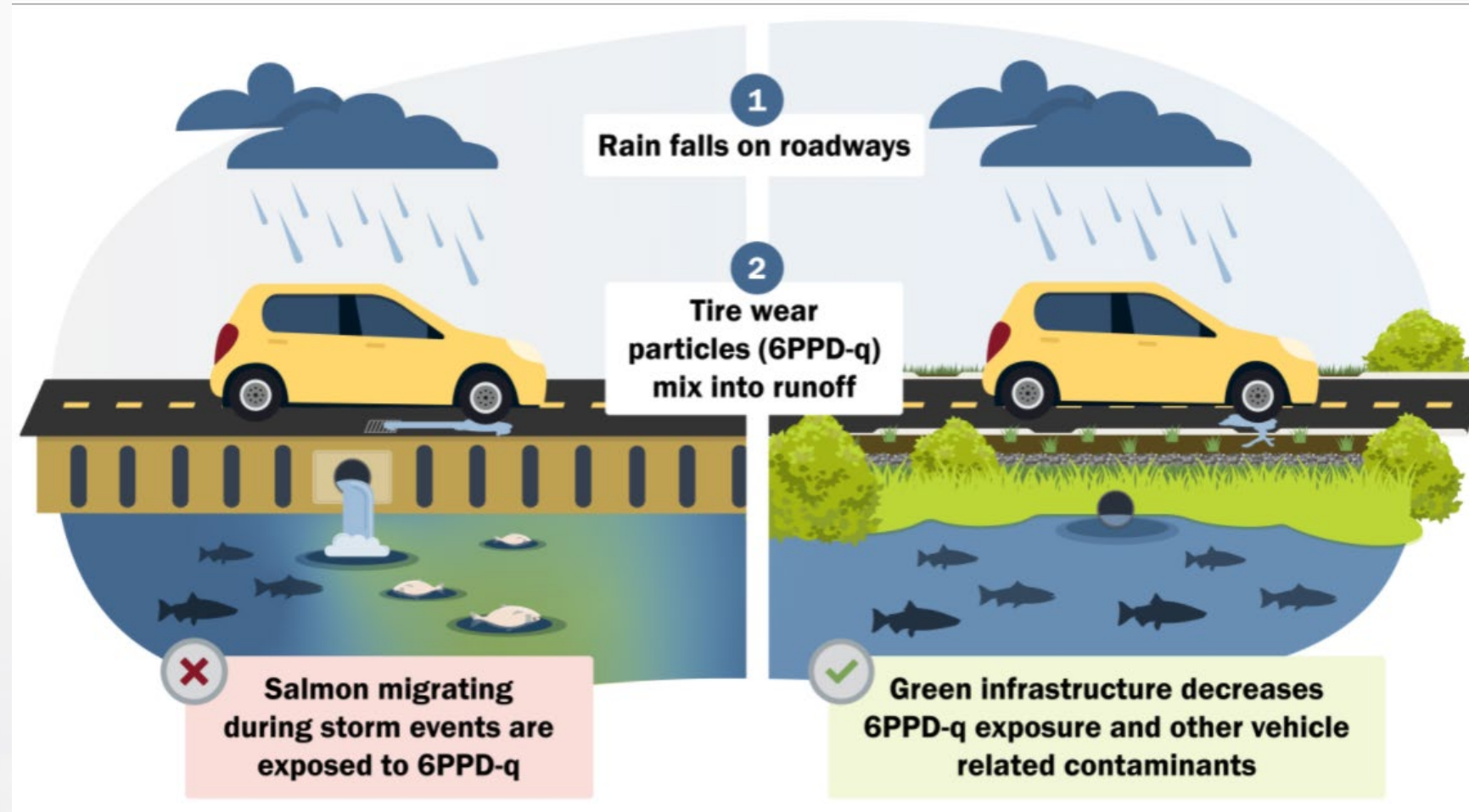
ECB policy statement

South Central local forum conversation with ECB

State budget investments

Federal investments

Making Waves article



Credit: ECY

Federal Leadership Task Force – Stormwater Coordination Group


The Stormwater Charter Group is currently pursuing a three-pronged approach:


- Identify and implement “high return, low risk” retrofits
- Define and identify large outfalls with inadequate stormwater treatment
- Identify science and monitoring gaps (and make recommendations on how to fill those gaps)

There is a draft list of the “high return, low risk” retrofit sites which will need funding to implement.

EPA [recently published](#) a (draft) testing method for determine where and when 6PPD-quinone is present in local stormwater and surface waters - [6PPD-q Using Liquid Chromatography with Tandem Mass Spectroscopy \(LC/MS/MS\) - Method 1634 \(Not yet approved\)](#). Local governments will be able to use this method to test for the presence of 6PPDq and inform how and where to implement protection and mitigation measures.

Stormwater & Salmon Recovery

- South Central LIO local forum
 - Request for the ECB to convene a limited series of focused meetings with representation from ECB to identify policy and funding pathways to integrate stormwater and salmon recovery efforts
- Stormwater SIL and EPA
 - Designate an ECB subgroup to work with technical experts-recognizing ongoing work and existing groups

ECB formed the new Water Quality work group
- 2022 Whatcom LIO Local Forum – FEMA's "no-rise" and CLOMR/LOMR requirements

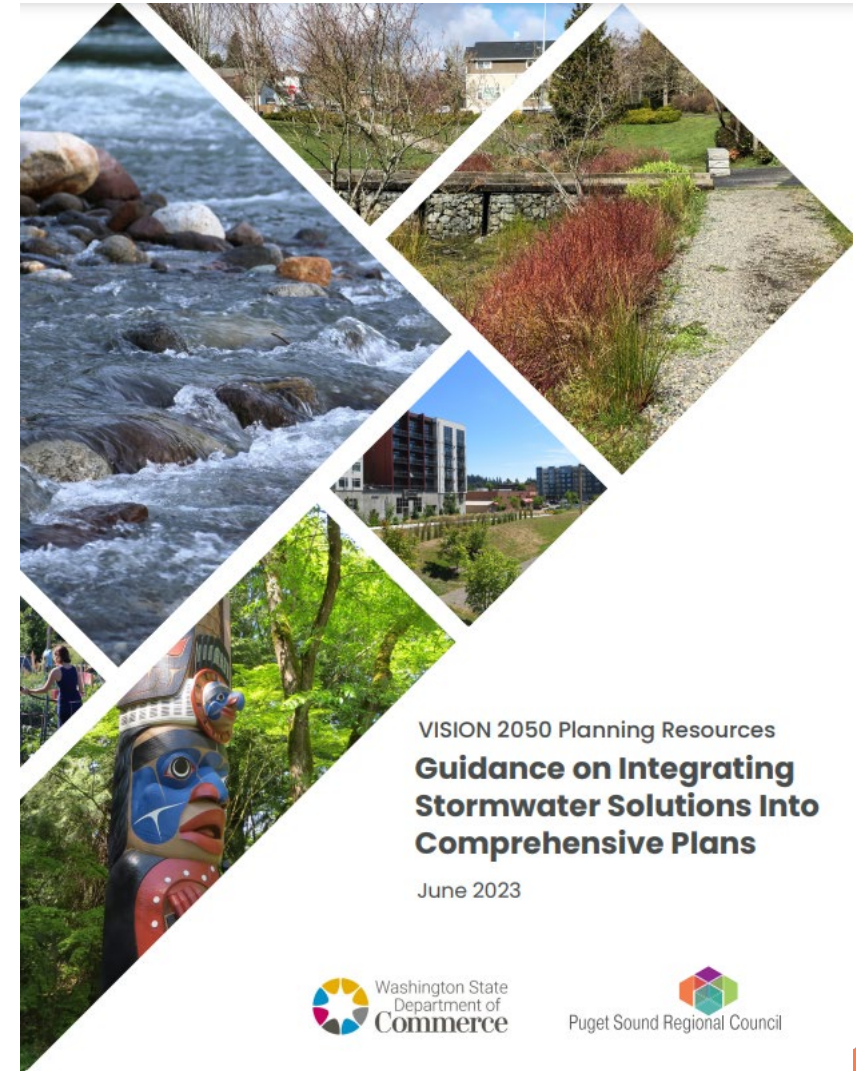
ECB Letter to the Federal Leadership Task Force

Integrating Stormwater Solutions into Comprehensive Plans

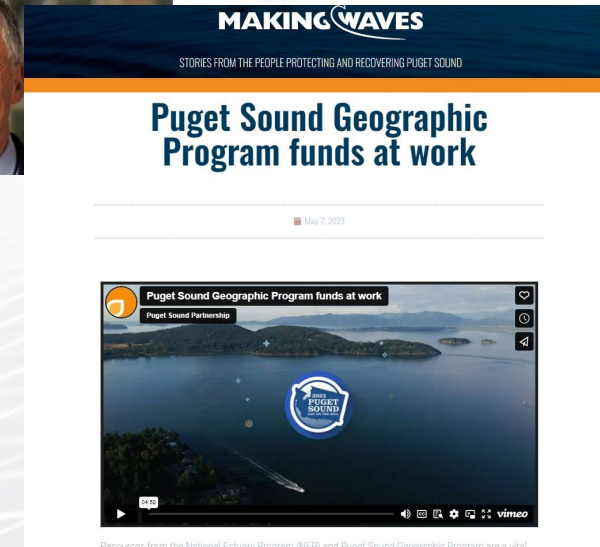
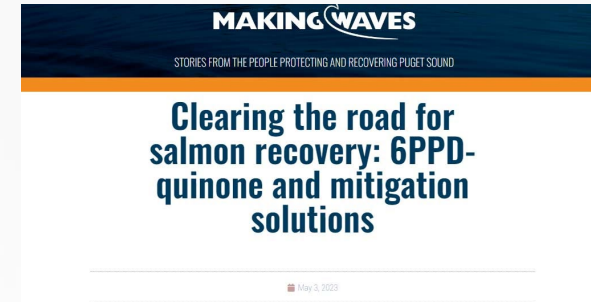
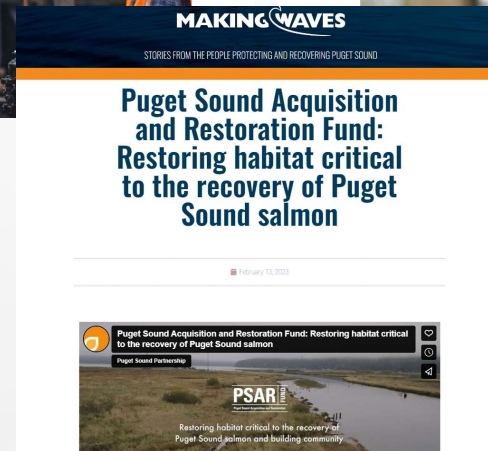
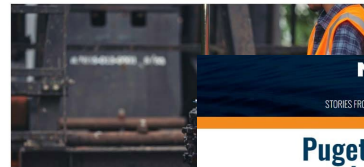
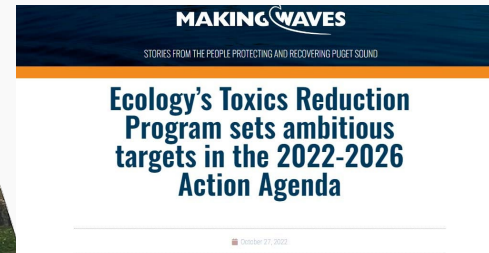
Guidance on stormwater and related water quality solutions by comprehensive plan element

- Model policies
- Examples
- Resources

Available at: www.psrc.org/our-work/puget-sound-recovery



Communicating implementation



Resources from the National Estuary Program (NEP) and Puget Sound Geographic Program are a vital

Discussion and Questions

How does the comprehensive planning process support Puget Sound recovery?