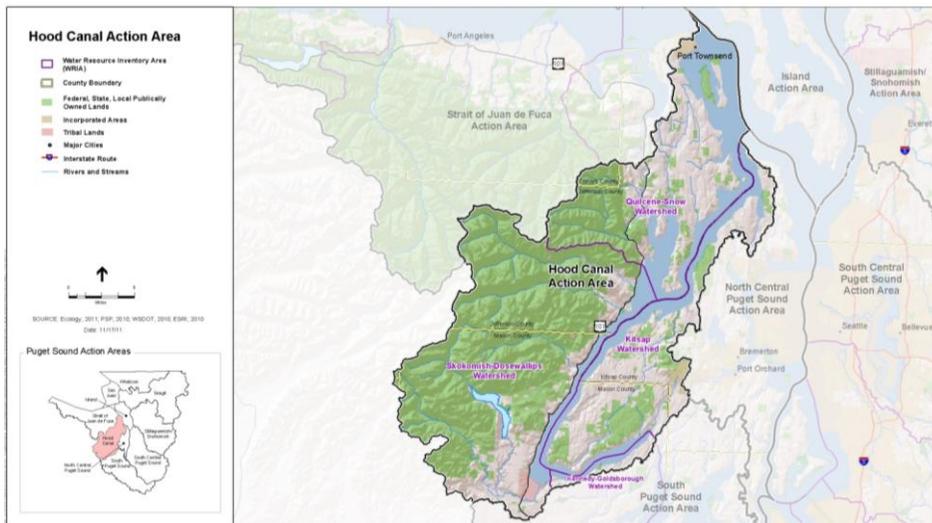


The Action Agenda in Hood Canal

Profile

Hood Canal is a long, narrow, natural L-shaped fjord that separates the Olympic and Kitsap peninsulas. This marine water body extends southward from Foulweather Bluff, at the northern tip of the Kitsap Peninsula, and Tala Point to its southern terminus at Lynch Cove. Hood Canal is approximately 68 miles long and one and a half to two miles wide. The Hood Canal Action Area includes the Canal itself, the uplands and streams that enter into it from both sides, and extends north to Point Wilson in the city of Port Townsend. On the west side of the Canal, major rivers including the Skokomish, Dosewallips, and Big Quilcene drop rapidly from the Olympic Mountains, while smaller streams such as the Dewatto and Tahuya drain the west side of the Kitsap Peninsula. Precipitation along the Canal varies from 75 inches annually at Skokomish, to only 19 inches in Port Townsend

Although the average depth of Hood Canal is 177 feet, the underwater topography can be as deep as 600 feet. Marine water circulation in Hood Canal is naturally poor, particularly in the southern 20 miles. A relatively shallow, underwater sill south of the Hood Canal Bridge limits water exchange with incoming ocean water from the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Hood Canal also has poor vertical mixing as fresh water entering from rivers and streams can form a distinct layer at the surface. Dense algal blooms die off, sink, and decay – reducing the dissolved oxygen in deeper layers and degrading water quality for many marine species. In general, these oceanographic conditions present special challenges in managing nutrient and other inputs deriving from human activities, in pursuit of water quality that supports both a healthy ecosystem and a healthy economy in the communities surrounding Hood Canal.



The Skokomish, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Jamestown S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, and Suquamish Tribes retain treaty rights in the Hood Canal region for hunting, fishing, and gathering. The Port Gamble S'Klallam Reservation is located at the north end of Hood Canal, while the Skokomish Reservation is located at the south end. The eastern shore of Hood Canal is home to the U.S. Navy Submarine Base at Bangor, the largest industry and development on the Canal. Populated centers in west Kitsap County include Port Gamble and Seabeck. Southern Hood Canal begins in Belfair and the Tahuya Peninsula and runs along relatively developed lower Hood Canal towards the Skokomish estuary and Potlach.

Notable Accomplishments

Skokomish and Quilcene River Estuary restoration projects

Regional Hood Canal Pollution, Identification and Correction (PIC) Program

The Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program investigative study, which illuminated the causes and implications of chronic and episodic low dissolved oxygen

Regional Riparian Planting and Invasive Species Control Programs

Regional conservation planning including the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project of up to 7000 acres of forest and 1.8 miles of shoreline

Much of the west side of Hood Canal borders Olympic National Forest and Park. The US Highway 101 and population centers of Quilcene, Brinnon, Hoodsport, and the Skokomish Valley lie along the narrow fringe of land on the west shore of the Canal. The Hood Canal Bridge is a critical transportation link between the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas. The proximity to Olympic National Park and Forest, cultural attractions in Port Townsend and Union, and hunting, fishing, and camping opportunities have generated a significant tourism industry and the proliferation of recreational homes.

Unique Ecosystem Characteristics and Assets

Hood Canal is famous for its shellfish as it is characterized by prime growing conditions for oysters and other shellfish species. Rivers flowing from the Olympic Mountains mix with brackish waters at ideal temperature and water conditions that support some of the largest shellfish hatcheries and productive growing areas in the world. The native Olympia oysters (*Ostreola conchaphila*) of Hood Canal were largely overharvested by 1870, although several small populations in the area are being nurtured back to life. Oyster growers introduced the larger, faster-growing Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) to compensate, and shellfish farms were staked out throughout Hood Canal. Today the oysters of Hood Canal are internationally famous, and connoisseurs identify them by place names including Quilcene, Dabob, and Hama Hama, much like fine wines from specific regions

and vineyards. Oysters and other bivalve species are filter feeders, processing hundreds of gallons of water daily, and are thus highly valuable for their ability to clean the water. However, this also makes them vulnerable to pollutants and toxic contaminants.

The human population of the Hood Canal region is generally low, as a majority of the uplands are managed as private and public forest lands. Relatively larger population concentrations are found along lower Hood Canal and around Lynch Cove. Though impacted by the dissolved oxygen problems and other modifications to rivers and shorelines, fisheries and aquaculture remain economically significant

to the Hood Canal region. Commercial and recreational fisheries occur for salmon, spot prawn, Dungeness crab, clams and oysters, and geoduck. Fishing is closed for rockfish and flatfish, due in part to the recent low dissolved oxygen problems.

Hood Canal is home to several other important and unique marine and upland species. An evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) of chum salmon that return in the summer spawn only in the rivers and creeks of Hood Canal and the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca. Other populations of Chum, Coho, Pink, and Chinook salmon spawn, rear, and migrate in Hood Canal, along with steelhead, Bull, and Cutthroat trout. Many of these salmonid species spend a large part of their early lives in the estuary, and water quality conditions in the Canal are essential to their continued survival. Hood Canal is also used by marine mammals, and has unusual timing periods for birthing and pupping of some seal species. Orca whales occasionally enter Hood Canal for short periods of time to feed on prey species indigenous to Hood Canal. In places, patches of old growth and other intact forest provide unique habitats for bird species and mammals in close proximity to the marine shoreline. Herds of elk in the eastern Olympics migrate seasonally along the river corridors.

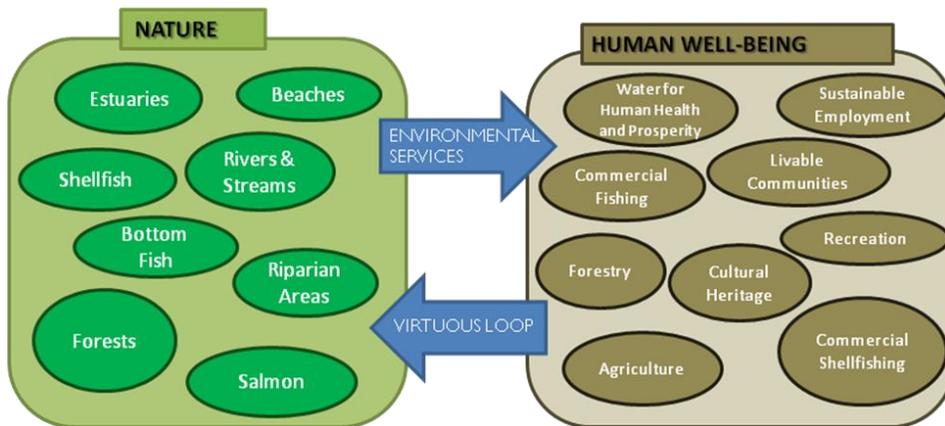
The natural beauty and relatively warm summer water conditions of the Canal draw many visitors for boating, sailing, water-skiing, swimming, and diving. A unique blend of year-round and seasonal residents and visitors comprise the watershed's population, and often promote activities to restore Hood Canal's water quality, species, and other ecosystem features.

Local Action Agenda Process

The Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) is the Local Integrating Organization for the Hood Canal Action Area. HCCC is a watershed-based council of governments, comprised of Jefferson, Mason and Kitsap County Commissioners, and Skokomish and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribal Leaders. The vision of the HCCC is that *humans benefit from and coexist sustainably with a healthy Hood Canal*. As the Local Integrating Organization (LIO), HCCC is responsible for leading the prioritization and implementation of Action Agenda strategies and actions in the Hood Canal Action Area. The Puget Sound Partnership's Leadership Council has formally recognized the HCCC as the Action Area's LIO. Originally established in 1985, the HCCC was created to address community concerns about water quality problems and related natural resource issues in the watershed. As such, the Council provides an effective, well-established forum in which many of the issues anticipated to be under the purview of LIOs can be addressed. They have worked through a series of public outreach efforts, partner workshops, and Board consultations, to help the community find common ground on a vision for Hood Canal's future. Through collaboration with partners and the community, the HCCC has also identified the most critical ecological and socioeconomic focal components that should be fostered into the future, the most imminent pressures diminishing those priorities, and an initial list of key strategies and actions important to protecting and restoring the environmental and economic health of Hood Canal. Further prioritization is needed, and will continue in 2012.

Key Threats/Pressures

The community has defined 17 ecological and socioeconomic focal components, illustrated in the diagram below, that together cover the scope of the LIO's vision statement and must be conserved.



There are regional pressures that endanger the ability of the focal components to function and persist into the future, and are the focus of the region’s pressure reduction objectives. Although the prioritization of strategies and actions that most effectively alleviate these pressures still needs to be completed for the IWMP and the Action Agenda, the processes did identify the pressures/threats below as ranking ‘very high’ or ‘high’ in the Hood Canal region. These include:

- Residential / Commercial Development (very high)
- Transportation / Service Corridors (very high)
- Climate Change / Severe Weather (very high)
- Shoreline Infrastructure (Marine and Freshwater) (high)
- Shoreline Levees (Marine and Freshwater) (high)
- Water Withdrawal / Diversions (high)
- Invasive Species (high)
- Wastewater (high)
- Stormwater (high)
- Timber Production (high)
- Oil / Hazardous Spills (high)

Opportunities, Priorities and Near Term Actions

The HCCC has identified a comprehensive set of strategies and near term actions that would be needed to reduce pressures and meet the vision, though further refinement is needed to prioritize them and create a work plan to optimize the coordinated efforts to implement actions that have explicit outcomes. Implementation of the actions identified and presented below will contribute substantially to the recovery of the Hood Canal Action Area. Top priority near term actions that are in-progress are identified below. The list following the Near Term Actions are actions and strategies that are either in-progress and ongoing or have been recognized as a need.

Priority Near Term Actions (in-progress)

- In coordination with a number of partners, HCCC will complete its Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) by June 30, 2013. Based on critical, high priority strategies and actions identified in the IWMP, HCCC will develop Local Near Term Actions for incorporation into the Action Agenda.
- In coordination with the US Navy and other partners, HCCC will complete the In-lieu Fee (ILF) Mitigation Program instrument by June 30, 2012. The HCCC ILF Program is intended primarily to serve permit applicants in the Hood Canal drainages of Kitsap County, Jefferson County, and Mason County whose project triggers compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources. The HCCC ILF Program will enable mitigation monies generated as a result of these projects to be directed toward the top conservation and restoration priorities in the Hood Canal watershed, as guided by the Instrument and that are commensurate with the type and amount of impacts generating the mitigation monies. Working with its partners in this process, HCCC will be in position to implement high priority actions from the ILF for 2012 and beyond.
- Phase I of a regional Hood Canal Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program is in progress to determine the needs for a comprehensive regional program. Results of this Phase I approach will allow development and implementation of the regional program during Phase II, slated for 2014 and beyond.
- HCCC is pursuing a stormwater retrofit program to identify and prioritize stormwater retrofit opportunities throughout the Hood Canal watershed. By the end of 2013 a list of prioritized stormwater retrofit projects will be available to determine feasibility for implementation.
- By June 30, 2013, HCCC will convene a climate change symposium to identify unique vulnerabilities and potential adaptation strategies for the Hood Canal Action Area. Based on results of this symposium, HCCC will identify high priority adaptation strategies.
- As the Lead Entity for salmon recovery, HCCC will target funding to the highest Tier I salmon recovery projects between 2012-2014, as listed in the Hood Canal Three Year Work Plan. Projects include acquisition, protection, and restoration activities.

Additional Actions and Strategies

Planning

- Assess the need to update county comprehensive plans to meet goals of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP). Empower the HCCC IWMP Steering Committee to evaluate Land Use and advise the HCCC Board on progress.
- Participate in the updating of Shoreline Master Plans (SMPs) for Kitsap and Mason counties and the City of Bremerton (South Kitsap Industrial Area) to ensure consistency with goals of the IWMP. Support implementation of the plans once completed.
- Recommend opportunities to implement and enforce existing regulatory programs of the counties (SMP, Critical Area Ordinances [CAOs], County Comprehensive Plans, etc.) and state (Revised Codes of Washington [RCWs] and Washington Administrative Codes [WACs]) such as around permit enforcement on new development.
- Identify opportunities to improve planning for, and services of and between, urban and rural communities such as identifying grant opportunities and funding for improving sewer systems.
- Improve financial and technical assistance programs aimed at fostering voluntary stewardship and improving re/development standards such as participating in Low Impact Development trainings and implementations, identifying standards for softshore protection, and engaging in sustainable working farms and forests.

Agriculture and Forestry

- Participate in and support efforts to permanently protect larger tracts of forests for their ecological and community values. For example, the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project which is working to conserve 7,000 acres of forest and 1.8 miles of shoreline on Port Gamble Bay as well as projects in Dabob Bay and Stavis.
- Protect, foster and incentivize sustainable, working forests and farms (e.g., extinguishing development rights and other programs) by engaging in the Dosewallips, East Jefferson and Tahuya forest protection efforts.
- Implement and monitor effectiveness of programs such as Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) and similar agreements, the USFS Northwest Forest Plan and Access and Travel Management Plans, and select Salmon Habitat Projects.
- Form a Hood Canal forests and forestry focal group to develop and implement balanced approaches to conserving forests and forestry and support sub-regional groups to meet regional goals.
- Form a Hood Canal agriculture focal group (or three affiliated sub-regional groups) to develop and implement balanced approaches to conserving agricultural lands.

Nearshore and Estuaries

- Consult with landowners and public about potential high priority Puget Sound Nearshore Estuary Restoration Program (PSNERP) projects and advocate for funding for high priority projects with landowner support.
- Restore beaches by removing or retrofitting infrastructure, setting back structures where feasible, and revegetating shorelines. Ensure updating and implementation of priority shoreline projects across various plans.
- Restore estuaries by removing infrastructure and setting back levees/revetments where feasible. Ensure updating and implementation of priority estuary projects across various plans.

Invasive Species

- Identify and create strategies to focus on invasive species that pose the biggest threats to implementation of the IWMP and salmon recovery plans.
- Educate decision-makers on the need to increase funding available for Noxious Weed Control Boards to help implement local priorities .
- Work with partners to implement a Regional Knotweed Control Strategy that includes messaging and outreach to key constituents such as landowners, landscapers, and nurseries.
- Implement WDFW's and Skokomish Tribe's Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan for organisms like ballast water, Zebra mussels, etc. Develop messaging and outreach to key constituents.

Water Quality and Wastewater

- Identify where in the Hood Canal watershed the highest risk onsite septic systems (OSS) are located now or could be located in the future. Develop a mechanism, such as through the regional Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program, to evaluate the risk of contribution of nitrogen from OSS to Hood Canal and to address critical uncertainties in nitrogen loads.
- Research and register low cost, low maintenance, non-proprietary retrofits of existing OSS and new OSS that will reduce nitrogen by at least 80% from the initial septic effluent concentration

(average domestic septic tank effluent is 57.7 mg/L TN, concentrations range from 26-124 mg/L TN) as well as remove pathogens.

- Explore the current regulations related to wastewater and water quality (nutrients and dissolved oxygen) and assess potential additional or modified local or state regulations to address nitrogen and/or dissolved oxygen in Hood Canal from septic systems, boats, and other sources.
- Continued involvement of county and state managers and planners in the Aquatic Rehabilitation Technical Advisory Committee to develop recommended actions to address water quality in Hood Canal. Finalize and implement the Aquatic Rehabilitation Communication Plan to educate and engage the public in the realization of actions.
- In coordination with state agencies (Fish and Wildlife, Parks and Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, etc.) and building from the WRIA 16 Planning Unit's prioritized list of needs, address the need for additional sanitary services at popular recreation sites around Hood Canal.
- Continue connecting residences and businesses to the new advanced wastewater treatment and water reclamation facility in Belfair. Monitor improvements in water quality in the adjacent marine waters and gauge treatment efficiency and effluent quality. Recommend updates for shellfish growing areas in the currently downgraded/prohibited area in Lower Hood Canal as appropriate.
- Using experience from the Belfair project, implement existing plans to improve wastewater infrastructure in the Port Hadlock and Dosewallips areas.
- Facilitate progress with the Potlatch advanced wastewater treatment facilities to connect Skokomish Tribal housing development, the Potlatch State Park, and residences in adjacent shoreline areas.
- Complete detailed design engineering and permitting and obtain funding for advanced wastewater treatment in the core Skokomish Reservation area.
- Revise feasibility analyses and facility planning and obtain funding for advanced wastewater treatment in the Hoodsport Rural Activity Center (RAC) area.
- Work with jurisdictions and the WRIA planning units to develop and implement a regional continuous monitoring program that includes: groundwater; streams, shorelines, and marine waters; and stream aggradation/degradation mitigation, including a field-based assessment of uplands and individual streams on sources and amounts and how it can be mitigated. This research will also include Phases II and III of a water demand, supply and availability study as well as community outreach and education around water quantity and quality.
- Use scientific findings, including those of the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program and others to develop corrective actions and management programs to address issues of eutrophication and low dissolved oxygen in Hood Canal. Related activities to be supported include:
 - Completing the peer review process of the scientific findings;
 - Supporting additional investigation on the effects of low dissolved oxygen on the marine biota as appropriate to develop pertinent corrective actions; and
 - Developing and implementing an appropriate monitoring and evaluation program building on available marine water monitoring (i.e., ORCA buoys, monthly citizen-monitoring program, and others).
- Improve coordination and support implementation of the Washington Department of Ecology's Model Toxics Control Act cleanup plan for industrial pollution in Port Gamble Bay, Geographic Response Plans, and Northwest Wildlife Plan.
- Work with partners to continue the clean up of marine debris throughout Hood Canal, but with a particular focus on the north end.

Stormwater

- Advise jurisdictions throughout the Hood Canal watershed on opportunities to revise development code to incorporate current stormwater management practices, specifically by adopting and incorporating the most current Department of Ecology stormwater manual. Work with these jurisdictions to prioritize stormwater retrofits within Hood Canal based on an analysis of current land use and the existing built environment and to promote retention of natural land cover as the most effective way to prevent stormwater runoff.
- Support the counties and tribes to implement the PIC programs that address issues of pollutant source control and illicit discharge detection and elimination.
- Provide guidance on the adoption of low impact development (LID) practices to be used as a first choice to the maximum extent practicable in new development, redevelopment, and retrofitting of existing development.
- Request that the Washington State Department of Ecology provides a statewide stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) training program (similar to the Certified Erosion and Sediment Control Leads program) for site inspectors to learn about compliance with stormwater BMPs.
- Track the recommendations of Ecology's Stormwater Workgroup and work with the HCCC Technical Advisory Committee Stormwater Workgroup to evaluate if additional, Hood Canal specific, stormwater monitoring plans are needed.

Floodplains

- Implement comprehensive floodplain management plans where they exist.
- Restore floodplains and channel migration zones by removing infrastructure and setting back revetments where feasible and protect functioning floodplains and channel migration zones.

Outreach and Education

- Ensure incorporation of outreach and education with the public and key stakeholders in actions and initiatives identified above.
- Develop materials to convey to the public the importance/benefits of work done to multiple focal components.

Link to Recovery Targets

The Hood Canal Integrated Watershed Management Planning process has identified several focal ecosystem components and ecosystem pressures relevant to supporting the achievement of Soundwide recovery targets, such as reopening shellfish beds, addressing stream flows and toxic in sediments, rebuilding salmon runs, reducing the stress to marine biota from low dissolved oxygen levels, and establishing a Puget Sound quality of life index. Associated strategies and actions will alleviate pressures. As an example, the action to protect Port Gamble Bay and associated forested uplands

IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATION IN HOOD CANAL

The Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) is the Local Integrating Organization (LIO) for the Hood Canal Action Area. The HCCC works with partners, community groups, and citizens, to advocate for and implement regionally and locally appropriate actions to protect and enhance Hood Canal's environmental and economic health.

supports achieving targets associated with land use, armored shorelines, salmon, and eelgrass to name a few. Local recovery actions and their role in achieving Soundwide recovery targets is an ongoing process and will be honed in the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

Local Implementation Structure

The Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) is a watershed-based council of governments, comprised of Jefferson, Mason and Kitsap County Commissioners, and Skokomish and Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribal Leaders, and is the Local Integrating Organization for the Hood Canal Action Area. The HCCC, through a broad array of effective partnerships, is working with the community to stitch together efforts to create a strategic action plan that will set priorities to ensure a future in which the Hood Canal remains a special place for all to enjoy. The Integrated Watershed Management Plan, which is synonymous with the Action Agenda update, will be used as the vehicle to provide information to the Puget Sound Partnership on progress made in Hood Canal.

References and Additional Resources

Hood Canal Coordinating Council: www.hccc.wa.gov

PARTNERS: LOCAL JURISDICTIONS AND SERVICES	WEBSITE
City of Bremerton	http://www.ci.bremerton.wa.us/
City of Port Townsend	http://www.cityofpt.us/
Clallam County	http://www.clallam.net/
Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Board	http://www.clallam.net/weedcontrol/
Jefferson County	http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/
Jefferson County Community Development	http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/commdevelopment/default.htm
Jefferson County Environmental Health	http://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/index.php?environmental
Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee	http://www.jcmrc.org/
Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board	http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/WeedBoard/Default.asp
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Kitsap County Parks and Recreation	http://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/

Kitsap County Public Works	http://www.kitsapgov.com/pw/
Kitsap County Surface and Storm Water Management	http://www.kitsapgov.com/sswm/
Kitsap County Health District	http://www.kitsapcountyhealth.com/
Kitsap County Stream Team	http://www.kitsapgov.com/dcd/nr/stream_team/
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Mason County Community Development	http://www.co.mason.wa.us/community_dev/index.php
Mason County Environmental Health	http://www.co.mason.wa.us/health/environmental/index.php
Mason County Public Works	http://www.co.mason.wa.us/public_works/index.php
PARTNERS: CONSERVATION DISTRICTS	WEBSITE
Jefferson Conservation District	http://jeffersoncd.org/welcome.html
Kitsap Conservation District	http://kitsapcd.org/
Mason Conservation District	http://www.masoncd.org/
PARTNERS: ORGANIZATIONS & FOUNDATIONS	WEBSITE
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Kitsap Peninsula Visitor and Convention Bureau	http://www.visitkitsap.com/
Laird Norton Family Foundation	http://www.lairdnorton.org/
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North Kitsap Trails Association	http://www.northkitsaptrails.org/
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Northwest Watershed Institute	http://nwwatershed.org/
Pacific Northwest Salmon Center	http://www.pnwsalmoncenter.org/

People for Puget Sound	http://pugetsound.org/
Port Townsend Marine Science Center	http://www.ptmsc.org/
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Washington Onsite Sewage Association	http://www.wossa.org/
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Wild Fish Conservancy	http://wildfishconservancy.org/
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Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe	http://www.jamestowntribe.org/
Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe	http://elwha.org/
Point No Point Treaty Council	http://pnptc.org/
Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe	http://www.pgst.nsn.us/
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Puget Sound Partnership	http://www.psp.wa.gov/
Washington Conservation Corps	http://www.ecy.wa.gov/wcc/index.html
Washington State Department of Agriculture	http://agr.wa.gov/
Washington State Department of Ecology	http://www.ecy.wa.gov/
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife	http://wdfw.wa.gov/
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Washington State Department of Natural Resources	http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Pages/default.aspx
Washington State Department of Transportation	http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/
Washington State Parks and Recreation	http://www.parks.wa.gov/
Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office	http://www.rco.wa.gov/
Water Resource Inventory Area 16/14b Planning Units	http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/wriapages/16.html

Water Resource Inventory Area 17 Planning Unit	http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/wriapages/17.html
PARTNERS: FEDERAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS	WEBSITE
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National Marine Fisheries Service	http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	http://www.noaa.gov/
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University of Washington	http://www.washington.edu/
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Washington State University Jefferson County Extension	http://jefferson.wsu.edu/
Washington State University Kitsap County Extension	http://county.wsu.edu/kitsap/Pages/default.aspx
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PARTNERS: PRIVATE SECTOR	WEBSITE
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