



**Kitsap  
County**

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION



## WATER STEWARDSHIP 2019

### BY THE NUMBERS

- In 2019, over 4900 adults and children engaged with our programming through 73 volunteer and engagement opportunities offered throughout the year. These opportunities included workshops, demonstrations, training sessions, field trips, and events focused on stewardship of natural resources and environmental protection.
- Trained 91 new volunteers- 23 Beach Naturalists, 23 Stream Stewards, and 45 Salmon Docents.
- Over 2400 contacts were made at Kitsap Salmon Tours at 9 sites across Kitsap County.
- Trained volunteers committed 2880 hours to improving local ecosystems through education, stewardship and community science.

### ISSUE

With approximately 250 miles of marine shoreline, over 10,000 acres of public lands managed by Kitsap County Parks, and hundreds of streams that feed into Puget Sound and Hood Canal, Kitsap County supports a wide array of diverse ecosystems. Kitsap is also home to a steadily increasing population, and in 2018, population density reached the third highest density of any county in Washington state, estimated at 586 people per square mile. The land and water resources that make Kitsap such a beautiful place to live are threatened by this growth and urban development. The Puget Sound Institute estimates that 52,000-66,000 pounds of pollutants are released into Puget Sound each day, and this cost of stormwater pollution is expected to exceed \$1 billion over the next ten years. Pollution and habitat loss threaten some of the Pacific Northwest's most iconic species including the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale and Pacific salmon populations. In 2012, Washington State set an ambitious goal to recover the Puget Sound by 2020, focusing on 31 different indicators. As of 2019, 27 of those did not meet their prescribed targets. The road to ecosystem recovery is long, and education and citizen engagement are essential components of the strategy to protect, preserve, and recover our region for future generations.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Water Stewardship program is to cultivate environmental stewardship in Kitsap County through education and engagement opportunities.

### RESPONSE

The WSU Extension Water Stewardship Program provides Kitsap residents with educational training programs, volunteer opportunities, and educational events to help turn environmental knowledge into action.

WSU Kitsap Extension employs a three-pronged approach to tackling water and natural resource issues:

1. We teach people to value and protect our natural resources through public events and three in-depth training programs led by staff and local experts.
2. We train people to be volunteer educators, to share knowledge and inspire a stewardship ethic in others.
3. Through partnership with local agencies and governments, we connect people with local restoration, enhancement, and monitoring projects.



## QUOTES

"Stream Stewards training spreads information about and ignites awareness and interest in our watershed ecology. Kitsap County still has pristine streams and waterways, it is up to our citizens to appreciate this wonderful resource and behave thoughtfully to maintain it."

"The [Beach Naturalist] training opened my eyes to the incredible wonder and fragility of the marine ecosystem in the Kitsap County and the importance of volunteers to running vital programs to keep the community safe by monitoring, protecting, and educating the public about sea life Kitsap County."

"[My favorite part of volunteering at Kitsap Salmon Tours was] interacting with visitors of all ages about Salmon and watching their level of awe and respect grow."

## PARTNERS

City of Bremerton, Chico Salmon Park Stewardship Group, Clean Water Kitsap, Clear Creek Task Force, Kitsap County Parks, Great Peninsula Conservancy, Harbor WildWatch, Keta Legacy Foundation, Kitsap County, Kitsap Conservation District, Kitsap Public Health District, Kitsap PUD, Kitsap Regional Library, Olympic College, City of Poulsbo, The Kitsap Sun, Washington Sea Grant, and more.

## IMPACTS

In 2019, the Water Stewardship Program trained 91 new volunteers across the Stream Steward, Salmon Docent, and Beach Naturalist training programs. Collectively, trainees engaged in 75 hours of instruction, 65 presentations, and 27 training sessions both in classroom and outdoor field settings. Post-training evaluations indicated that the vast majority of trainees across the three programs (97%, 35 of 36 respondents) plan to share what they learned in the training with others and to apply what they learned in their personal lives. Kitsap Beach Naturalist volunteers provided 14 free beach explorations, which brought over 530 event participants out to 7 beaches across the County to learn about intertidal creatures.

Presentation topics varied based on training focus, and in 2019, examples of these included:

- Stream Stewards- Low impact development, stream invertebrates, watershed geology and hydrology
- Salmon Docents- Salmon life cycle and physiology, stormwater and climate change impacts
- Beach Naturalists- Salish Sea oceanography, intertidal invertebrates, local mussel research

From volunteering to protect water quality to preserving Kitsap salmon habitat, trainees recognized a clear path from their training experience to taking action. Alumni of the educational trainings contributed more than 2880 hours of service to improve Kitsap ecosystems through education, stewardship and community science.

In 2019, a few examples of how alumni volunteered to make a difference include:

- Educated the public: Led free beach explorations throughout summer; shared salmon information with visitors at Kitsap Salmon Tours
- Stewardship: Removed invasive scotch broom from Newberry Hill Heritage Park; cleaned debris from area surrounding salmon hatchery in Gorst
- Community science: Monitored Kitsap Memorial Park beach for sea star wasting disease; analyzed plankton samples in search of toxic algal bloom species

