

Shore Stewards News

GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES FOR LIVING NEAR WATER | ESTABLISHED 2003

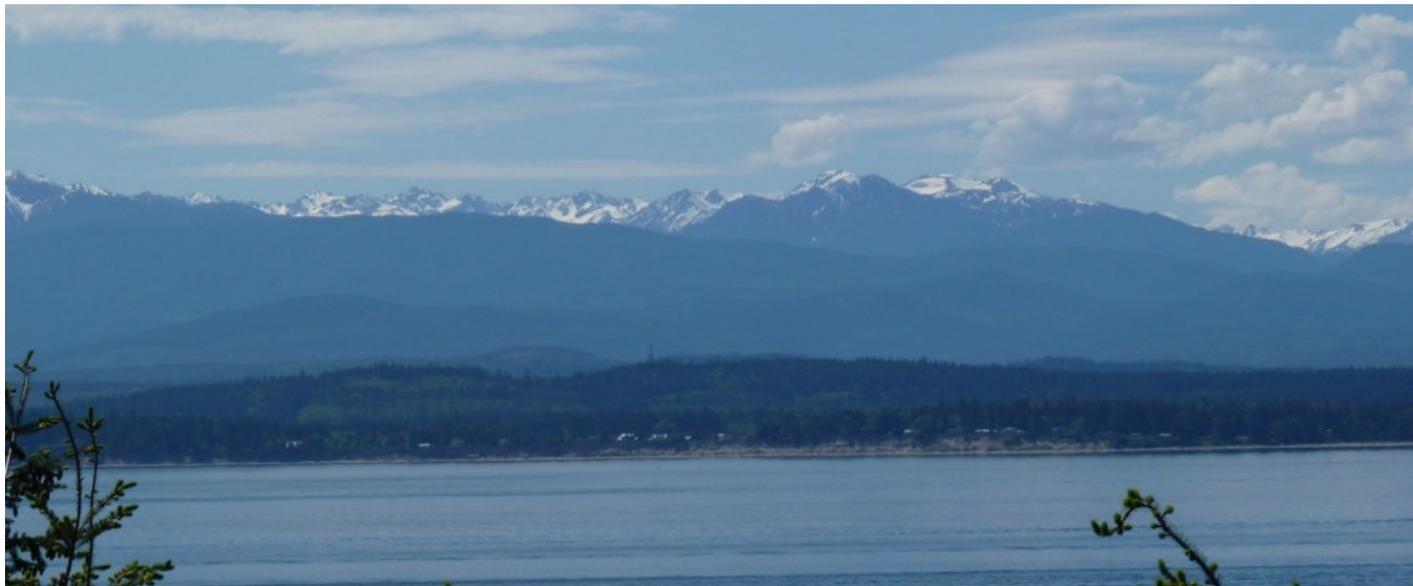


Summer 2016

Online Resources for Shoreline Landowners

By Cheryl Lowe, Water Programs Coordinator, Jefferson WSU Extension

Photo credits: clam dinner photo by Betsy Carlson. All other photos by Cheryl Lowe.



A web search for “Shorelines in Puget Sound” gives you over 660,000 results—a wealth of information that can be fascinating... or overwhelming! Sometimes a website has good information, but it’s hard to figure out how to get to it. This issue provides a brief introduction to some resource sites that might be of interest to you. So much depends, of course, on what you like to do or want to know more about. I learned a lot in the process of compiling this list; spend a little time exploring on your own to find your own favorite links.

NOTE: Some websites such as the WA Department of Health shellfish safety website constantly update their site. Other websites offer access to long-term environmental data, research or summary reports and may not be updated as often. Also, bear in mind that some websites require specific browsers to work properly and a few may not be compatible (yet) with mobile devices.

General Resources

Shore Stewards

In addition to Guidelines and great videos, the Shore Stewards website also has a “**Resources in Your County**” page that provides useful links to county, regional and state agencies as well as the WSU Water Resources. Use your County link to see shore-related county agencies and programs. This may help you figure out which County agency to call if you have a particular question. Topics include shoreline permits, water quality, septic systems, and salmon recovery projects.



This Resources page also provides links to the home page of local Tribes and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (<http://nwifc.org>) as well as a few federal agencies. Their work to manage and restore marine and freshwater resources benefits everyone. Subscribing to the Northwest Treaty Tribes News via this website provides new perspectives on what’s going on. For example, did you know that the Nisqually Tribe is using harbor seals to collect data about the decline of steelhead in Puget Sound? <http://nwtreatytribes.org/harbor-seals-listening-steelhead/>.

Shore Friendly

Shore Friendly is a public information website for waterfront homeowners who care about protecting both their property and the health of Puget Sound. Funded by the National Estuary Program through WDFW and WA Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), it is a great introduction to natural shoreline processes, managing beach erosion, and soft-shore protection strategies. Photos of real-life projects (before and after) help you visualize what this looks like and attractive illustrations make it easier to understand complex concepts. From here you can download the newly published, 45-page “Your Marine Waterfront: A guide to protecting your property while promoting healthy shorelines”.



Habitat Work Schedule



Want to know what's happening with salmon recovery, protecting shorelines, and nearshore restoration in your community? The Lead Entity Habitat Work Schedule (HWS) system is a mapping and project tracking tool that allows Salmon Recovery Lead Entities to share habitat protection and restoration projects with funders and the public. Pictured here is the Dabob Bay Shoreline Protection and Restoration project, sponsored by the Northwest Watershed Institute. The site is managed by WA State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).

I used this site a few weeks ago, after someone told me about an old barge that had been “planted” years ago on a Hood Canal shoreline near Brinnon, WA, burying the beach and now abandoned. Once I figured out the landowner (using Google Maps and parcel ownership from the my county’s Planning Office website), I used the Habitat Work Schedule’s interactive project maps to discover that the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group and WDNR will be removing and restoring that section of shoreline this summer. What a nice surprise! You can search by project name, by county or by sponsoring organization. You can also search using a map zoomed into your area and see which projects are proposed, active or completed.

Shellfish Harvesting — DOH & WDFW

The Shore Stewards video [Recreational Shellfish Harvest](#) is a great introduction to this fun activity. If you are harvesting shellfish, you’ll want to know if they are safe to eat. The WA Department of Health (DOH) keeps an up-to-date website that helps you avoid problems.

DOH Shellfish Info

Be informed and be safe. **Always check to see if a beach is approved and open for recreational harvest before going to the beach.** There are 3 ways to do this:

- [Washington Shellfish Safety Map](#) – Searchable maps show recreational beaches closed to harvest due to biotoxins or pollution. It does NOT show harvesting seasons. If you are harvesting on a private beach, look at status reports for nearby beaches.
- The [Shellfish Safety Bulletin](#) is an online text version of recreational closures, listed by county.
- A 24-hour Shellfish Safety Hotline **1-800-562-5632** gives recorded information on closures.



If you are harvesting on a public beach, you will also need to know if the beach is open for harvesting. For now, you must go to the WA Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) website to get that information. They're now working on an easier and more integrated system.

WDFW Shellfish Info

Search by county or beach map area for info about regulations and shellfish season for your local beach or wherever you are traveling this summer. Each beach profile includes when it's open for harvesting, a little

info about the site, and directions. Or use their hotline— **1-866-880-5431**.

Mapping Resources

Most agencies and organizations now use some form of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to analyze data and make it available to users and the public. Most of these on-line mapping programs use similar principles and with a little practice (and use of the basic instruction guidelines often provided) you can learn a lot. These programs may require specific Internet browsers to work well. And remember— you can always call the hosting agency and ask questions. They appreciate knowing that people are using their website.

Washington Coastal Atlas



This is an amazing, user-friendly mapping portal managed by the WA Department of Ecology (ECY) that allows you to learn more about your particular property or neighborhood. There are easy links to find aerial shoreline photos of almost every inch of Puget Sound shoreline ('oblique' or angled views that provide an interesting perspective, like the section of Whidbey Island shown here), links to a particular Coastal Map ("Quick

Search"), information about slope stability, and flood hazard maps. You can also find information on this website about eelgrass beds, pocket estuaries and feeder bluffs; compare modern (2006) and historical aerial photos; and find public beach and access points.

You can also make your own customized map, choosing which layers (info overlays) you want to see as well as selecting base maps that show bathymetry, topography, or NOAA charts. Adjusting the transparency of the layers allows you to see what's underneath that layer. Plus, you can print or download the maps you've created.

Disclaimer: Information on this database comes from a number of sources. The purpose of these Coastal Atlas maps are to inform broad-scale land use decisions and share data, but should not be used to substitute for site-specific studies carried out by qualified professionals. ECY assumes no liability for data depicted on these maps.

WDFW Mapping Resources

Other WDFW interactive maps include:

- Salmon status and habitat use (SalmonScape)
- Fish passage barriers
- Priority habitats and species (PHS)
- Marine bird survey densities

SalmonScape maps, such as the one on the right, tell you which salmon species use which streams in a given area. For example, I created this map showing which streams near Quilcene, WA are being used by Coho salmon. (Blue=Coho present; red=spawning; green=rearing; purple=has potential but is blocked; brown=historic). This program is designed to work with Chrome and Internet Explorer web browsers; it does not print maps if you are using Safari.



Environmental Monitoring

Department of Ecology Monitoring Portal

The WA Department of Ecology (ECY)'s Environmental Assessment Program monitors a wide range of environmental indicators. This website makes those reports accessible to the public. Data includes:

- Fresh and marine water quality, including the BEACH program
- Marine sediment monitoring
- Water quantity (i.e. stream gauges)
- Groundwater
- Stormwater

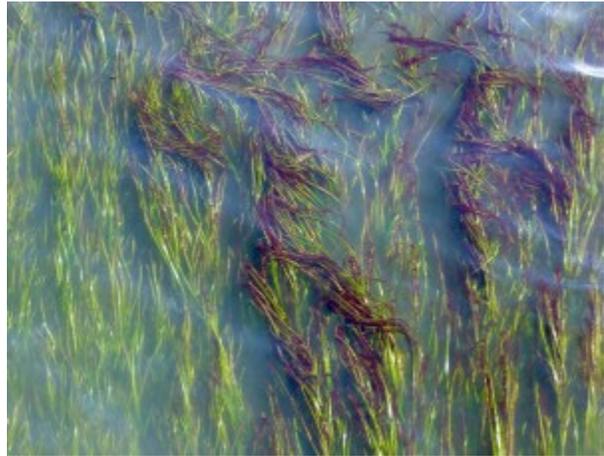


For example, on the [Marine Water Index](#) page you can see an overview chart of trends that shows which areas of Puget Sound have been getting healthier in the last 10 years, as well as places such as Oakland Bay and Bellingham Bay that have not improved much. Recent studies and publications, in the column on the right side of the website, provide more details.

Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP)

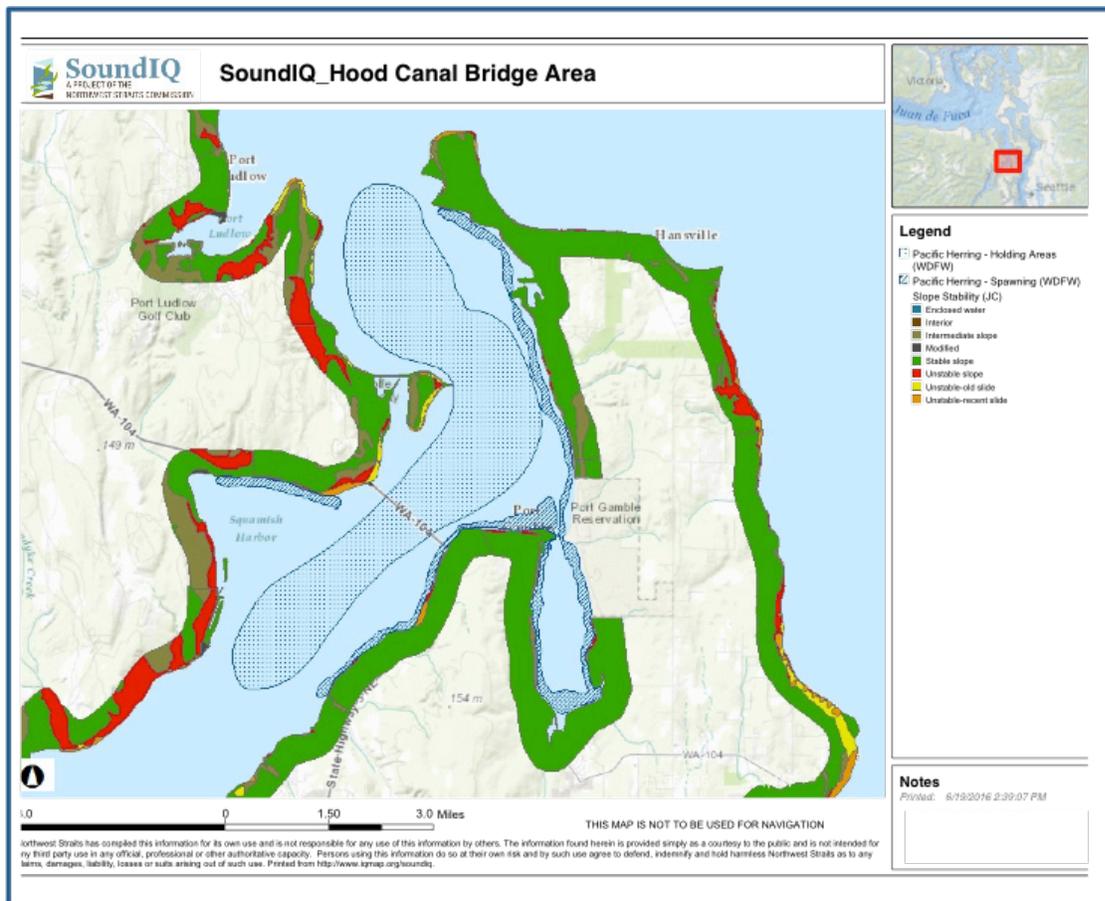
This is a more technical website. The goal of the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP) is to work with agencies, universities and other partners to coordinate monitoring efforts. It provides high quality, science-based and accessible monitoring information for partners, decision-makers, and ultimately, the public.

Various technical Working Groups focus on particular areas (marine birds, stormwater, marine water quality, nearshore, toxics, etc.) Each group takes a slightly different approach, but their goal is to figure out how to measure if progress is being made toward ecosystem health. The website has a list of inventories that have been completed, and presents basic information, including program scope, objectives, focus, extent, and links to on-going monitoring programs currently operating in Puget Sound.



SoundIQ

SoundIQ is the Northwest Straits Commission's easily-accessible, web-based application to share data collected by Marine Resource Committees (MRC) and the Commission (see Northwest Straits Commission below.) SoundIQ provides links to data and reports from the Northwest Straits Initiative and MRC projects. A wide range of complementary data layers from other sources can be turned on and off to create customized maps. For example, I generated a map (below) showing Pacific herring spawning and holding areas, as well as slope stability information for upland areas. The printed map includes the legend. In a separate inquiry, when I requested information about MRC reports in the Discovery Bay area, it gave me links to seven different MRC reports about Olympia oysters, forage fish, nearshore restoration sites and a benthic algae & macro-invertebrate survey.



News Links, Newsletters and Blogs

[Salish Sea News and Weather](#)

Do you like to read news articles about marine life, current issues or results of new research studies, but it's a hit or miss affair? **Salish Sea News and Weather** provides a free weekday news clipping service that filters the news for you, compiled by long-time communications professional Mike Sato. Read it online or subscribe and receive it by email. Your email information is never shared and you can unsubscribe at any time.

[Northwest Straits Commission](#)

The Northwest Straits Commission carries out regional conservation projects and supports the work of seven local Marine Resources Committees through funding, technical support, training and regional coordination. Their monthly newsletter not only highlights activities of the various Committees, but also provides links to recent marine-related news articles. They just initiated a "Catch More Crab" social media campaign where you can submit your photos of crabbing, highlighted on their home page this

month. Go to <http://www.nwstraits.org/get-involved/join-the-mailing-list/> to subscribe to the newsletter. You can also subscribe to the Northwest Straits Foundation newsletter at that same location.

Encyclopedia of Puget Sound

This website is a product of the University of Washington [Puget Sound Institute](#). It's a free, open access website where scientists, policymakers and educators find and share information about the state of the Puget Sound ecosystem — its species, its features, its health and its people. They work closely with federal and state agencies such as the EPA and the Puget Sound Partnership.



Although they say, “articles are geared toward scientists and policymakers looking for a summary of the best available science describing the Puget Sound ecosystem“, the articles are suitable for anyone interested in Puget Sound. Content is divided into broad topics related to Puget Sound science and overseen by an editorial board: biology, chemistry, physical environment, climate change, policy issues and social and economic sciences.

They recently published the “PugetSoundFactbook_v3.0”, which you can also download from here. Their on-line magazine (<https://www.eopugetsound.org/magazine>) always has interesting articles. One of the latest series of articles was called “**Rethinking Shoreline Armoring**”. Shoreline armoring often impacts access for surf smelt and sand lance beach spawning (forage fish eggs pictured here). You can also subscribe to their eNews.

Other Coastal Blogs & Resources

I would be remiss if I didn't mention to other favorite coastal geology blogs:

- Hugh Shipman's Gravel Beach blog (<http://gravelbeach.blogspot.com>) about a coastal geologist's observations of formations and changes to beaches throughout Puget Sound.
- Ian Miller's The Coast Nerd Gazette (<http://coastnerd.blogspot.com>) As the Coastal Hazards Specialist for Washington Sea Grant, this blog reflects Ian's time spent on research, education and outreach about chronic erosion, climate change, the Elwha, tsunamis and other coastal hazards.



Your local marine science center might also be a good source of information. Depending on where you live, check out the [Port Townsend Marine Science Center](#); [Feiro Marine Life Center](#); [SEA Discovery Center](#) (formerly the Poulsbo Marine Science Center, now managed by Western Washington University); [Shannon Point Marine Center](#); or the [Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve](#).



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