

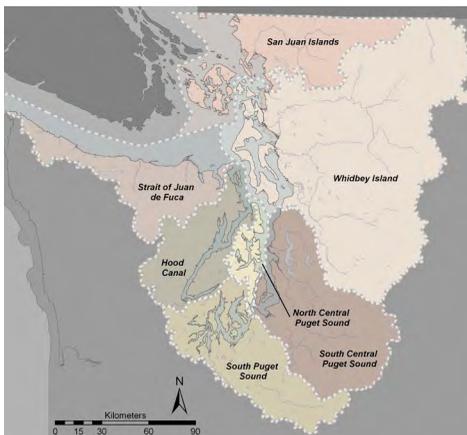


DNR and a Healthier Puget Sound

A briefing paper for the Puget Sound Partnership Ecosystem Coordination Board, presented in four parts:

- an overview,
- an example of DNR's activities in Puget Sound Partnership's priority watersheds, and
- a listing of DNR's activities that support the Partnership's four priority strategies
- DNR budget requests for 2009-2011 supporting a healthier Puget Sound

Puget Sound Partnership Priority Areas in the Puget Sound Watershed



Environmentally responsible management of natural resource lands and strict adherence to regulation promote a healthier Puget Sound. This document reviews the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' current and proposed stewardship activities that improve the condition of the Sound. It describes our many partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies that are critical to the job of cleaning up and protecting the Sound for the future. We look forward to collaborating with the Puget Sound Partnership on these important efforts.

Overview: DNR stewardship in the Puget Sound watershed

Washington's Puget Sound watershed comprises 8.8 million 'upland' acres that contain natural resource lands such as forests and farms, along with lakes, rivers and streams. Activities on these lands upstream contribute to the health, or lack of it, in waters downstream, which eventually reach the Sound.

In this watershed, DNR manages 2.6 million acres of natural resource lands, including 1.9 million acres of aquatic lands—mostly in the Puget Sound, Hood Canal, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca—and all navigable lakes and rivers that feed into this marine ecosystem. Our management of 650,000 acres of forested

state trust lands in this watershed provides revenue to public schools, universities, and other beneficiaries.

We also enforce regulations across 3.5 million acres of forestlands in this watershed, including the state trust lands mentioned above, plus privately owned forests. In addition to providing wildlife habitat, these forestlands help the Puget Sound watershed by purifying water as it percolates into aquifers, contributing to groundwater recharge, and absorbing carbon dioxide that would pollute the air and soils above the Sound.

Streamside forests in our care and under our regulation help control sedimentation and regulate stream flow, water quality, and temperature. Both our management of forested state trust lands and our regulation of private forestlands

are governed by federally approved habitat conservation plans that protect threatened and endangered plant, animal, and aquatic species.

Our management of these forested lands in the Puget Sound watershed has been recognized with “green forest” certification, reassuring the people of Washington that our state trust lands meet the highest standards of environmentally responsible stewardship.

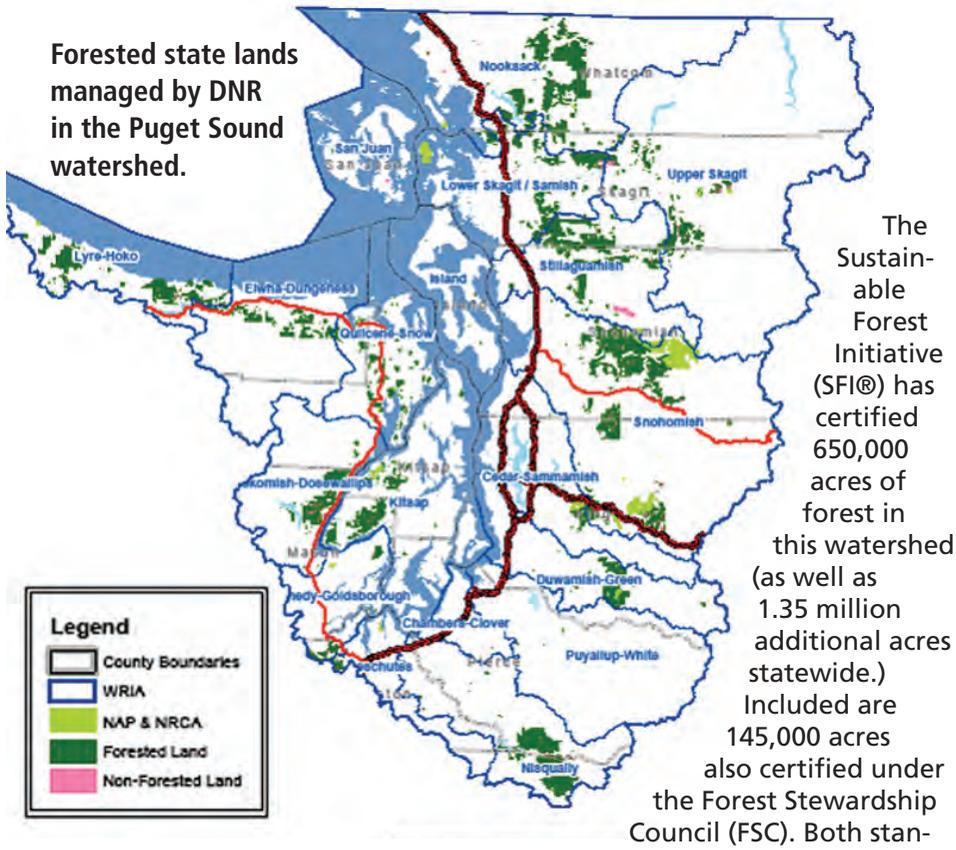
standards acknowledge environmentally responsible management and integration of sustainable growing and harvesting of trees alongside protection of wildlife, plants, soils, water, and air quality.

DNR-managed Natural Resources Conservation Areas and Natural Area Preserves permanently protect more than 60,000 acres in 30 areas in the watershed. Of these, 19 areas have a direct connection to Puget Sound, lakes or streams.

As we manage the 1.9 million acres of aquatic lands in the Puget Sound watershed, we work with various partners to clean up and restore aquatic habitat. Our lessees, such as marinas, work with us to protect aquatic resources. Our stewardship also includes four aquatic reserves, three of which have a site-specific management plan (the fourth near completion), that protect and preserve high-quality aquatic ecosystems in these locations.

Looking ahead, we are developing a habitat conservation plan that will provide a systematic approach to enhancing and protecting essential habitat across the aquatic ecosystems in Washington State that are in our care, including those in the Puget Sound watershed. As this Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) develops, we continue to care for state-owned aquatic lands in the Sound.

Forested state lands managed by DNR in the Puget Sound watershed.



Federally listed marbled murrelet, a seabird that depends on older forests in which to nest—one of the species protected under DNR’s trustlands HCP.



Kennedy Creek Natural Area Preserve, one of thirty such protected areas in the Puget Sound watershed.



Healthy streams across state trust lands and private forests provide spawning habitat for salmon and other fish and wildlife.



Multistory, older forest on state trust lands provides diverse habitat for native wildlife and filters rainwater as it moves through the Puget Sound watershed.



Forest road upgrade and culvert replacement provide fish-friendly habitat for years to come.



Selective harvesting creates snags and downed woody debris to maintain a more diverse, complex forest.

From snowcapped hills to whitecapped waters, DNR protects the Puget Sound watershed

Example using Puget Sound Partnership’s North Central, South Central and South Puget Sound priority areas.

From the snow-topped Cascade foothills to whitecaps on Commencement Bay, DNR’s role in managing and protecting lands affects the health of Puget Sound. To illustrate the extent of our work throughout the smaller watersheds within the Puget Sound watershed, let’s visit the Puget Sound Partnership’s (PSP’s) North Central, South Central, and South Puget Sound priority areas, beginning at the hilltops.

Water and habitat protected on state trust forests

In upper hills and valleys of the watershed we manage the state trust lands. Those trust forests in the range of the northern spotted owl are managed under a multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that protects habitat for the owls, marbled murrelets, salmon, and many other threatened and endangered plants and animals. This federally approved plan exceeds state regulations and provides guidance to protect wetlands, riparian forests, unstable slopes, diverse trees and snags, and other important features. ‘Old growth’ and older complex forests also are protected.

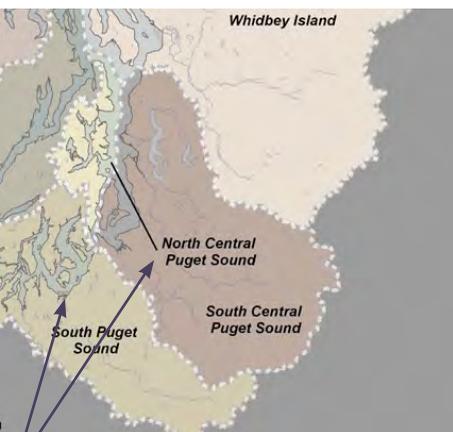
Each year, these lands welcome millions of hikers, campers, fishers, and others seeking recreational activities. We work with these groups to

make sure that the ever-increasing recreation activities do not have a negative affect on the streams, lakes, and health of the natural ecology.

Protecting public resources on private and state forestlands

Also on the hills and lower valleys of the Puget watershed, in addition to forestry regulations mentioned on Page 1, our teams of geologists help us to identify and protect potentially unstable slopes through developing landscape-scale maps. DNR geologists perform detailed landslide risk assessments to minimize the risk of damage to water quality or habitat.

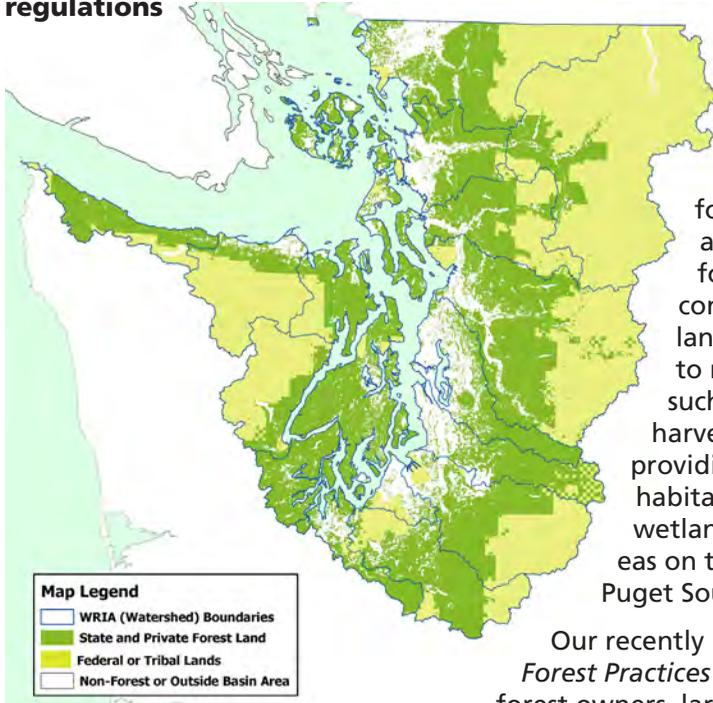
Our geologists inform people about potential natural hazards, and conduct a variety of other activities including water-resource appraisals,



◆ Puget Sound Partnership North Central, South Central, and South Puget Sound Priority Areas

education, and research. We also oversee the rehabilitation of areas that were disturbed by surface or underground mining. Restoring vegetative cover, soil stability, and protecting water conditions are essential so the sites can become healthy habitat, forests, and wetlands once more. These lands once again become recharge areas for the aquifers that drain into Puget Sound.

Washington's Puget Sound watershed and lands under state forest practices regulations



Puget Sound watershed 8.8 million acres

State and private forest lands under Forest Practices rules 3.5-3.8 million acres

Assisting small, private forest landowners to protect resources

Our forest stewardship professionals advise and assist hundreds of small forest landowners annually. They visit forests to examine conditions and advise landowners on how to meet their goals, such as growing or harvesting timber, providing or restoring habitat, and managing wetlands and riparian areas on the lands that feed Puget Sound.

Our recently published book, *Forest Practices Illustrated*, helps forest owners, large and small, understand how to apply these state forest practices rules.

Throughout the Puget Sound basin, DNR offers compensation programs to encourage private landowners to conserve their forestland and protect streams. These programs compensate small forest landowners for trees they may not harvest due to regulations, and help pay for removal of fish passage barriers on small forest landowners' property. Another program buys easements on forested islands in rivers or streams and has protected 500 acres—much of which is fish spawning and rearing habitat—since 2003.

We also administer grants that support voluntary conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for species either listed as threatened or endangered, or proposed for listing.

Partnering with a federal grant program (carried out by DNR) with conservation groups, 30,000 acres of forestland in King County is now protected from conversion to non-forest uses. Grants such as these protect traditional forestry, water sources, cultural resources, and fish and wildlife into the future.

Salmon, returning upstream to spawn, can pass through new fish-friendly culvert.



Consulting foresters work with homeowners on stewardship plans for private forestland that protects water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife.



DNR was a partner in the restoration recreating an intertidal marsh in the Duwamish River in Tukwila.





Volunteers plant cedar trees as part of a restoration project to provide shade for a stream running through their community.



In 2005, DNR removed this crumbling railroad trestle, a safety and environmental hazard, over the Skykomish River in Monroe. The project also included restoring habitat in the river.



Withdrawn from leasing, Olympic View has been cleaned up and natural estuary habitat restored.

Our Urban Forestry Program has worked with the cities of Puyallup, Tacoma and other communities statewide. DNR urban forestry specialists help communities and volunteers plant and sustain healthy trees and shrubs in public places. We also help repair the habitat corridors and healthy ecosystems linking natural resources lands and Puget Sound by providing education grants, and forest and streamside restoration in urban areas.

Where the Puyallup River meets Puget Sound

The Commencement Bay nearshore and tideflats include 12 square miles of shallow water, shoreline, and adjacent land involving myriad public and private landowners. Placed on EPA's Superfund National Priorities in 1983, the Bay had widespread contamination from 100 years of shipbuilding, oil refining, chemical manufacturing and storage, pulp and paper milling, and other industrial activities. Great progress has been made in cleaning up this important aquatic ecosystem. In addition to participating in cleanup activities, DNR has been involved in reviewing and developing the proposed remedies. DNR has:

- Conducted restoration projects at Olympic View Triangle, Middle Waterway, and currently Puget Creek.

- Funded projects to remove creosote treated pilings (Maritime History Museum Renovation).
- Carried out numerous derelict vessel removals and disposals.
- Made state-owned aquatic lands available for restoration.
- Provided funding for cleanup of the Thea Foss Waterway.
- Worked with Port of Tacoma to address wood debris at the former Foss log storage area.

Keeping aquatic lands healthy

To help support the sustained health of Puget Sound and other water bodies, DNR sets conditions on aquatic lands leases. For example, as a condition of our new lease agreements in the Thea Foss Waterway, marina managers participate in the Waterway Stewardship and Accountability Program, working with recreational boaters, marina owners and operators, live-aboard boaters, shoreline businesses, and others who value the waterway for business and recreation. Lessees educate their users about contamination risks and how to minimize and avoid contaminating the waterway.

Another example of how we work with aquatic land leases is that we require most new improvements to be constructed out of environmentally inert substances. For example,



Harvesting wild geoduck from state-owned aquatic lands aquatic lands, part of a sustainable fishery.



Derelict vessel and debris before cleanup on Middle Waterway, Commencement Bay.



This marina lease in Gig Harbor is one of about 4,000 authorized uses of state-owned aquatic lands managed by DNR.

within the Thea Foss Waterway, upgrades are to include steel pilings rather than reconstructing with creosote-coated wood.

Sometimes DNR withdraws areas from leasing to preserve valuable intact habitat function. Withdrawn parcels include five in Commencement Bay—three along Marine View Drive, one at the head of Middle Waterway, and an eelgrass area at the mouth of the Thea Foss. Although these areas were too small to meet the criteria for aquatic reserves, they are protected all the same because their functions are important to habitat in the bay.

Collaboration also is key to long-term success of cleanup efforts. To that end, we facilitated efforts between public and private parties at the Asarco site to enhance cleanup actions and save taxpayers millions of dollars.

DNR works with tenants to address the negative impacts of Washington’s long history of log booms and log storage, which has resulted in submerged areas with significant wood debris. The Port of Tacoma has the former Foss Log Storage lease and is working on a restoration proposal for portions of this long-term log storage site.

Because derelict vessels pose potential significant impacts to safety and the aquatic environment, DNR

works to remove these hazards. In Commencement Bay, in addition to ongoing cleanups, we facilitated the removal of two derelict barges from Middle Waterway, enabling partners in the project to conduct a more complete cleanup and restoration of Middle Waterway.

DNR partnerships have been critical to the success of management and restoration projects, such as the Olympic View Triangle and removal of derelict pilings at the Puget Creek Beach. Partnering also provides environmentally responsible public access opportunities, such as the 2002 removal of hundreds of creosote pilings from derelict public docks in Thea Foss. After cleanup, new public access improvements were installed, constructed with non-toxic materials and a smaller footprint.

We currently are evaluating the costs associated with removal of the creosote piers abandoned by Asarco on state-owned aquatic lands. Removal of the piers will enable Point Ruston LLC to conduct a more thorough remediation on state-owned aquatic lands than was initially called for under an EPA-approved remediation plan.

The Puyallup River generates 100,000 cubic yards of sand and mud materials annually, much of which must be dredged to maintain navigation channels. We encour-



age beneficial reuse of these clean dredge materials for cleanup and restoration projects within the bay because it will save taxpayers millions of dollars.

The ‘litmus test’ for the Sound—the health of shellfish

We work with our tenants regarding the true costs of shellfish clo-

sure zones. As a result of work with sewer districts and Washington Departments of Health and Ecology, we continue working toward opening more shellfish beds. Projects include Dumas Bay, Vashon Wastewater Treatment Plant, Kitsap County Suquamish outfall, and Harstene Island, among others.



Healthy shellfish beds in Totten Inlet allow for a thriving seafood industry in Washington, one of the largest in the country.

How DNR’s work relates to the Partnership priorities for restoring Puget Sound

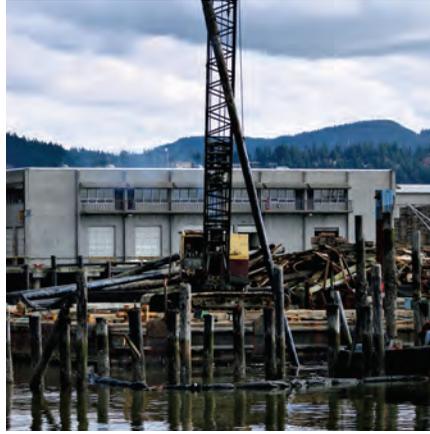
Much of our ongoing work and day-to-day activities address the health of Puget Sound. Working together on the challenges outlined in these PSP strategic priority challenges will be an opportunity to make permanent changes for a healthier Puget Sound. Following are examples of DNR activities that directly relate to PSP strategic priorities.

Priority A: Ensure that activities and funding are focused on the most urgent and important problems facing the Sound.

- Cleanup of creosote beach logs and pilings that leach toxics onto beaches and organisms.
- Derelict vessel removal that takes hazards out of the waters—vessels that potentially could sink and spread oils and other toxic materials into the Sound, and those that are a navigational hazard.
- Development of Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan in which we are qualitatively assessing the direct and indirect effects of DNR-authorized activities on species at risk, making changes that help protect the species, and prioritizing aquatic lands for conservation and restoration.
- Habitat enhancement projects that remove bulkheads and replace them with natural beach configurations that will support fish and wildlife habitat.
- Improvement of forest roads on state trust lands on a “worst-first” basis to remove fish-passage barriers (often in conjunction with timber sales), and minimize new road construction. In 5 years in the Puget Sound watershed, we improved more than 600 miles of out-of-date roads, abandoned 339 miles of roads, and removed or replaced nearly 100 culverts, helping to prevent siltation and restoring access to many miles of upstream habitat.
- Removal of fish passage barriers on private forestlands.
- Consultations with small forest landowners, finding grant assistance, and enforcing culvert replacement on private forest lands to allow migrating salmon and other wildlife safe passage in the stream.
- Cleanup of “Superfund” sites and restoration of native habitat.



DNR scientist examines the density of tree cover to increase our understanding of shading and habitat needs for both wildlife and salmon.



The removal of hundreds of creosote-laden pilings in Bellingham Bay is one step in a long process of cleaning up contamination in the bay and restoring the various aquatic ecosystems.



Cleanup of creosote-laden logs and other chemically treated wood is an important step in removing toxins from Puget Sound and other aquatic environments.

Priority B: Protect the intact ecosystem processes that sustain Puget Sound.

- Several state natural areas protect intact estuaries, wetlands and many forested uplands in the Puget trough to maintain function and diversity.
- Four existing aquatic reserves provide extra protections for different types of essential ecosystems. New externally proposed reserves are under evaluation using program criteria.
- Riparian forest protection, purchase of riparian easements and other programs help secure intact habitats essential to maintaining water temperature and diverse in-stream conditions.
- Partnerships with cities and counties on ‘best management practices’ for shoreline and tideland uses that protect the native ecosystem and prevent hardening of the shorelines with bulkheads.
- Co-management with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Tribes for a sustainable wild geoduck fishery in Puget Sound.
- Through the Aquatic Lands HCP, manage marine and freshwater bodies under an ecosystem-wide approach to better protect aquatic habitat, and reducing impacts from shading and structures.
- An ecosystem-based approach to management of marine and freshwater bodies—through the Aquatic Lands HCP—reducing impacts from shading, deleterious materials and structures.
- Protect large, forested buffers around streams, lakes and wetlands—under the Trust Lands HCP—to prevent erosion and provide aquatic and upland habitat. We are developing a headwater (small, non-fish bearing) streams conservation strategy to extend protection of these important resources farther upslope.
- Riparian buffers, recently enhanced through Forest Practices “Forests & Fish” commitments will protect fish-bearing streams on private lands into the future.
- The Sustainable Recreation Work Group will make recommendations on improving recreation on forested, aquatic, and other state-managed lands. The also will consider the impacts of recreation on natural resources.
- Updating state rules related to recreation to ensure we maintain a balance that allows recreation without damaging streams, habitat, and other important resources affecting the health of Puget Sound.



The forests surrounding Woodard Bay, a Natural Resources Conservation Area, offers protection for this large, healthy estuary in south Puget Sound.



Protected riparian forests on state trust lands and private forests help provide shade for fish bearing streams and nutrients for the fingerlings before their journey to Puget Sound.



On state trust lands, DNR is constructing bridges that help prevent soil runoff and other debris from damaging streams and habitat that affect the health of Puget Sound.

Priority C: Implement restoration projects that will reestablish ecosystem processes.

- Habitat enhancement projects in Puget Sound and in the lakes and rivers that feed it, such as removing bulkheads and replacing them with natural beach configurations that will support natural movement of waters along the beach and restore fish and wildlife habitat.
- Restore riparian forest habitat on state trust lands, putting in essential in-stream large woody debris, planting conifers to help maintain stream temperatures year-round, helping to provide food, resting and hiding habitat—all of which benefit salmon and other species, forests and marine systems.
- Cleanup “Superfund” sites—mostly in our estuary-ports—and restore habitat that connects open marine waters to intact river habitat corridors. We often raise the standards of cleanup beyond the minimums to leave healthier habitat in the long run.
- To prevent future contamination, we place certain conditions on aquatic leases with private and public sector tenants.
- Consulting with small forest landowners, to help them protect water quality and quantity on their forest streams, and with partners such as Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Recreation and Conservation Office. Since 2004, 350 stream miles have been opened for fish habitat.
- Study and monitor the extent and health of submerged aquatic vegetation such as eelgrass and kelp.
- Work with aquatic lessees to restore nearshore habitat and modify docks and other over-water structures to allow light into nearshore habitats, which benefits fish and wildlife using those areas.
- Permanently remove toxic substances such as old landfills in or along state aquatic lands, as with the cleanup of Bellingham Bay.
- Cleanup and education regarding derelict nets, marine plastic debris and other garbage.
- Continue efforts to remove non-native invasive species from Puget Sound.
- Issue conservation agreements for efforts such as restoration of the native Olympia Oyster, allowing aquatic project proponents access to grant funding.
- Work with our many partners to restore habitat and the natural movement of water along shorelines.

Priority D: Prevent the sources of water pollution.

- Work with aquatic lessees to install and maintain pump-out stations to make it easy for boaters to prevent pollution of waters.
- Work with trust land lessees in agriculture to prevent pollution and erosion.
- Work with ports and lessees in agreements and other management tools to prevent contamination by businesses that use the state's waters for navigation and commerce.
- Review industrial and small forest landowners' timber harvest plans, and enforce forest practices that prevent runoff from forest roads into streams and the sound.



DNR divers trained others in the safe removal of derelict fishing nets, crab pots and other marine debris which entangle fish and wildlife and damage the underwater habitat of Puget Sound.



Removal of *Spartina* and other non-native, invasive species is important to the health of Puget Sound and other aquatic lands.



View west across Puget Sound at dusk

Budget Requests for the 2009-2011 biennium that will help support the health of Puget Sound

Decision packages include operational and capital budgets

Aquatic Habitat Conservation Plan

Because 2.6 million acres of aquatic lands that we manage, both fresh and marine water, are home to several threatened or endangered species, we will ask the Legislature for \$4.23 million during the 2009-11 biennium to begin implementing the Aquatic Habitat Conservation Plan. The 45 staff positions we request would include a lead scientist, field biologists and other staff to carry out our role in assuring that we and leasees who use our lands fully comply with the federal Endangered Species Act.

Creosote Removal in Puget Sound

This program removes and reduces toxic compounds from the beaches, waters and sediments of the marine and estuary areas of Puget Sound to decrease the impact of water-shading on aquatic vegetation and reduce debris from derelict structures. Our capital project request of \$3.75 million in the 2009-11 biennium will fund staff and management to remove creosote structures at 12 to 15 locations and 12 beaches throughout Puget Sound.

Statewide Aquatic Restoration Projects

We have proposed to continue the \$300,000 per biennium Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account capital funds that are dedicated to restoration of state-owned aquatic land. The goal of this program is to leverage funds from other sources and work with our partners to conduct these projects. Projects we plan to be involved in soon include working with State Parks to soften the altered shoreline at Penrose State Park by removing two creosote-treated bulkheads and creosote-treated groins; working with the Northwest Straights Foundation on derelict gear removal at Cypress Island, Fidalgo Bay and Cherry Point; and restoring 4 acres of state-owned aquatic lands on Lake Washington next to the mouth of the Cedar River, which is part of a migratory and rearing corridor for Chinook salmon.

Derelict Vessel Removal

We will ask the Legislature for \$2 million to use during the 2009-11 biennium for removing and disposing of three large derelict vessels that pose a public nuisance and safety hazard to Washington's waterways, including Puget Sound. This funding, which matches the amount received in the previous biennium, would also help several local governments remove derelict vessels and would help reduce the approximately 180 vessels (23 of which are greater than 75 feet long) identified as threats to the environment. In addition, we are asking the Legislature to increase the biennial appropriation to remove small (less than 75 feet in length) derelict vessels. With these monies that come from a special account funded by boat registrations, we plan to hire additional staff and remove and dispose of 18 smaller derelict vessels during the 2009-11 biennium.

Aquatic Land Investigation & Cleanup

We are requesting \$800,000 in the 2009-11 biennium for the state's share of costs associated with the investigation and cleanup of state aquatic lands to prevent hazardous substances from entering Puget Sound waters. These lands include sites at Fidalgo Bay, Whitmarsh Landfill near Anacortes,

Asarco in Tacoma, Port Angeles harbor, Port Gardner Bay, and the Port Gamble mill site. In addition, this request will fund our 50 percent split with a current Lake Union lessee to clean up contamination in the Eastlake neighborhood of Seattle.

Forest Riparian Easement Program

This proposal is to continue the Forestry Riparian Easement Program (enacted by the Legislature in 2001) to compensate small forest landowners for 50 to 80 percent of the value of trees in riparian areas and on unstable slopes on which Forest Practices Rules do not allow them to log. Our requested appropriation of \$21.4 million for the 2009-11 biennium includes several positions to work through a backlog of applications to this program which, to date, has paid some \$15 million to small forest landowners and affected almost 4,000 acres of riparian habitat.

Family Forest Fish Passage Program

We propose to continue the Family Forest Fish Passage Program which the legislature enacted in 2003. Most estimates of the current workload suggest that the program must operate at an increased capacity to meet its 2016 deadline; therefore, our capital project request for the 2009-11 biennium is \$19.78 million – a substantial but necessary increase over the \$6 million appropriated for the 2007-09 period.

Marine Station

We seek reappropriation of \$1 million in funds for this capital project to continue converting the Marine Station at Gull Harbor to a multi-agency work center and shoreline public access site.

Landowner Incentives

For the 2009-11 biennium we will request an appropriation of \$414,000 to create a staff position and develop new incentives for private forest landowners to create and maintain habitat that supports the recovery of Washington's northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet. This request aims to use incentives, rather than regulation, to encourage landowners to maintain this habitat and create it where it does not currently exist – up to a fifth of this work will be carried out in the Puget Sound Basin.

Access to Biodiversity Information

We are requesting \$242,000 during the 2009-11 biennium to make biodiversity information broadly and easily available via a new web-based tool. This information from the National Geographic's Landscape America project will be of considerable use to the public, local government planners, land trusts and decision-makers in making better-informed decisions about land use. Although the implementation of this tool starts with other areas of the state, the lessons learned will eventually be applied to Puget Sound.

Expert Forestry Assistance

Obtaining the \$797,000 requested for Expert Forestry Assistance in the 2009-11 biennium will transition the stewardship function of our Small Forest Landowner Office from federal to state funding and will maintain the current level of technical support this program obtains from the Departments of Ecology and Fish & Wildlife. Agencies that rely on this program's advice, such as for obtaining fish passage removal grants, include the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, the Puget Sound Partnership, and many small forest landowners.

Evergreen Community Implementation

We will conduct urban forestry inventories in the Puget Sound Basin, where about 60 percent of the state's urban population lives. In recognition of the state's budget situation, we are slowing the inventory of urban community and urban forests for two counties. We will continue to provide urban forestry technical assistance and are requesting 2 additional staff positions.

Unstable Land Forms

We are requesting \$2.74 million during the 2009-11 biennium to bolster the Forest Practices Program which makes regulatory decisions about timber harvests and related forest road construction. The 5 additional staff this proposal calls for would help us better analyze, map and respond to forest practices that have the potential to affect the watershed of Puget Sound and other waterways.

Sustainable Public Access

We are seeking \$1.24 million during the 2009-11 biennium to designate staff as trail stewards and volunteer coordinators to monitor and improve the sustainable recreational use of our lands. This proposal is aimed at reversing the overuse and inappropriate recreational use of our lands. Many of the problem sites targeted are within the Puget Sound watershed and will be given priority attention to control runoff from upland streams as noted by research conducted by the Puget Sound Partnership.

Improving Forest Fire Prevention

We have asked for a \$296,000 appropriation during the 2009-11 biennium to provide seed money to match federal grants and hire additional staff to increase public awareness for wildfire risks. Increasing the number of communities that participate in the Firewise Communities program and supporting other campaigns to reduce the risks and impact of human-caused wildfire will prevent large wildfire events that damage the quality and functions of the watershed.

Surface Mine Reclamation

We have requested the necessary appropriation authority for \$210,000 for additional staff and related costs in the state's Surface Mining Program's inspection, enforcement and training functions. By conducting the 200 additional mine inspections annually that this proposal would allow, we can improve reclamation enforcement that results in better water quality.

Conclusion

The activities that occur on the lands and waters above Puget Sound affect the health of this ecosystem. The roles that each landowner and citizen play will make the difference. Stewardship of these vital segments of our environment is a major part of DNR's role as the manager of these public lands.

We are pleased to be a part of the Puget Sound Partnership efforts to permanently restore the health of Puget Sound. We look forward to our collaboration.

