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PUGET SOUND nearshore

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT



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What is The Puget Sound Nearshore and What is the Problem with It?

The Puget Sound nearshore is defined as that area of marine and estuarine shoreline extending approximately 2,500 miles from the Canadian border, throughout Puget Sound and out the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Neah Bay. It generally extends from the top of shoreline bluffs to the depth offshore where light penetrating the Sound's water falls below a level supporting plant growth, and upstream in estuaries to the head of tidal influence. It includes bluffs, beaches, mudflats, kelp and eelgrass beds, salt marshes, gravel spits, and estuaries.

The integrity of the nearshore ecosystem is in jeopardy. That jeopardy can result in further contaminated shellfish and reduced habitat, not only for the aquatic environment, but also for people whose

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project

Preface Background Scope Who We Are

The Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP) was formally initiated as a General Investigation (GI) Feasibility Study in September 2001, through a cost-share agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Washington, represented by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. This agreement describes our joint interests and responsibilities to complete a feasibility study to:

"...evaluate significant ecosystem degradation in the Puget Sound Basin; to formulate, evaluate, and screen potential solutions to these problems; and to recommend a series of actions and projects that have a federal interest and are supported by a local entity willing to provide the necessary items of local cooperation."

The Puget Sound Partnership and its Action Agenda is emerging as the hub for regional restoration and protection, and offers the Nearshore Partnership an opportunity to connect its work to emerging efforts in storm water, toxics, waste management and water supply. The Nearshore Partnership fills a vital role in the mission of the Puget Sound Partnership by strongly supporting habitat protection and restoration, the maintenance of biodiversity, and building our capacity for action, contributing to half of the eight goals defined by the Puget Sound Partnership.

Who Needs the Puget Sound Nearshore?

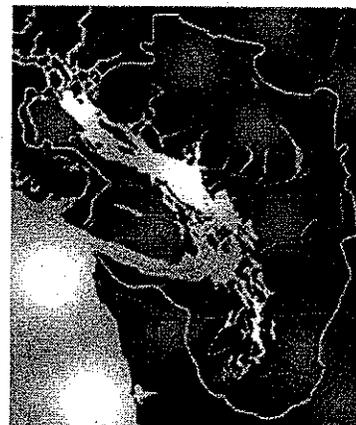
In addition to the aquatic life that makes its home in Puget Sound, the millions of citizens living and working in the Puget Sound region are also attached to the nearshore. For centuries, people have been drawn to the nearshore for economic and recreational purposes. Today, within the Northwest our lifestyles and economy rely on the Puget Sound nearshore. Shellfish and salmon industries, ports and refineries, and recreational activities all depend on the tidelands and shoreline.

Scope

The purpose of the project is to identify significant ecosystem problems in Washington State's Puget Sound basin, evaluate potential solutions, and restore and preserve critical nearshore habitat. The project is a cooperative effort among government organizations, tribes, industries, and environmental organizations to preserve and restore the health of the Sound's nearshore.

How Significant is This Project?

The project is one of the largest habitat restoration and preservation endeavors ever undertaken in the United States. Similar projects are underway in the



Puget Sound-Georgia Basin

livelihoods depend on shellfish and fish.

Nine of the ten species listed as endangered or threatened within the Puget Sound region inhabit the nearshore. Pollution in parts of Puget Sound has caused lesions and tumors in flatfish that eagles, seals, birds, and porpoises eat.

Urban and suburban developments along the Puget Sound shoreline have taken away critical shoreline, and estuarine and nearshore habitats. Changes in the physical processes include limiting food and nutrient sources for marine life, deteriorating beach sediment movement, and altering the flows of surface and groundwater.

Florida Everglades and Chesapeake Bay.

The federal government has approved funding for the first phase of the project that is underway by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Geological Survey. The first phase includes investigations of current information and developing plans to do the actual restoration and preservation work.

The second phase would be a commitment of billions of dollars to restore and preserve Puget Sound. Eventually, the Puget Sound Nearshore Project could be as significant as the nearly \$8 billion authorized for restoring the Everglades in Florida and \$5 billion for restoring Chesapeake Bay in Maryland.



Nearshore Project Area

What Can be Done to Restore the Puget Sound Nearshore?

Early restoration efforts have been encouraging, yet these efforts have been small compared to the widespread on-going environmental deterioration. A broad systematic approach to reverse and prevent the harm is needed. The next step is to understand conditions within the nearshore and what is causing the environmental problems.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Geological Survey, with assistance from state and local government organizations, tribes, industries, and environmental

organizations, are conducting scientific studies to develop solutions for the Puget Sound Nearshore.

What's Happening Now?

The project is currently in its feasibility study phase. The purpose of the feasibility study is to evaluate the factors that are causing the habitat to decline and pollution to occur in the Puget Sound basin, to formulate, evaluate, and screen potential solutions to these problems; and to recommend a series of actions and projects. The study will look for projects that have both a federal interest and support from local communities that are willing to provide the necessary investment to address the habitat or pollution problems in their area of the Sound.



Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project
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