



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building · 1111 Washington Street SE · Olympia, WA

December 9, 2015

Scott Steltzner
Squaxin Island Tribe
10 SE Squaxin Lane
Shelton, WA 98584

Dear Mr. Steltzner,

The Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP), a partnership between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), has been studying problems and opportunities related to the Puget Sound nearshore ecosystem and evaluating potential solutions. About 10 years ago, the local restoration community, including your organization, provided PSNERP with an extensive listing of potential project ideas throughout Puget Sound. Using scientific tools and criteria, PSNERP identified 36 of these project ideas as important opportunities to address nearshore restoration objectives in Puget Sound. A project submitted by your organization, Deschutes River Estuary Restoration, was included as one of the 36 ideas that PSNERP evaluated further.

The current phase of PSNERP's work has culminated in identification of an implementation strategy that places each of the 36 projects into one of three pathways. Your project, Deschutes River Estuary Restoration, has been identified as better suited for implementation outside of the PSNERP partnership with the Corps. Common reasons for this are that a project has already been completed using other funding sources or is making considerable progress towards completion. Projects not already underway or completed may be more appropriate for other non-Corps funding and implementation mechanisms. All 36 projects identified by PSNERP, regardless of suitability for Corps funding, have strong potential to benefit the health of Puget Sound because they are located in places where the proposed work is expected to have an ecosystem benefit at a significant scale.

We would like to thank you for your continued support of PSNERP and we look forward to working with you in the future to advance important nearshore restoration and protection activities.



If you have any questions about the PSNERP process or next steps, please don't hesitate to contact me at (360) 902-2750.

Sincerely,

Theresa Mitchell

Theresa Mitchell
Habitat Program / Restoration Division
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
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www.PugetSoundNearshore.org

CC:

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Amy Hatch-Winecka, WRIA 13/14 LE, (email)

Stephanie Suter, PSP (email)





US Army Corps
of Engineers.



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project

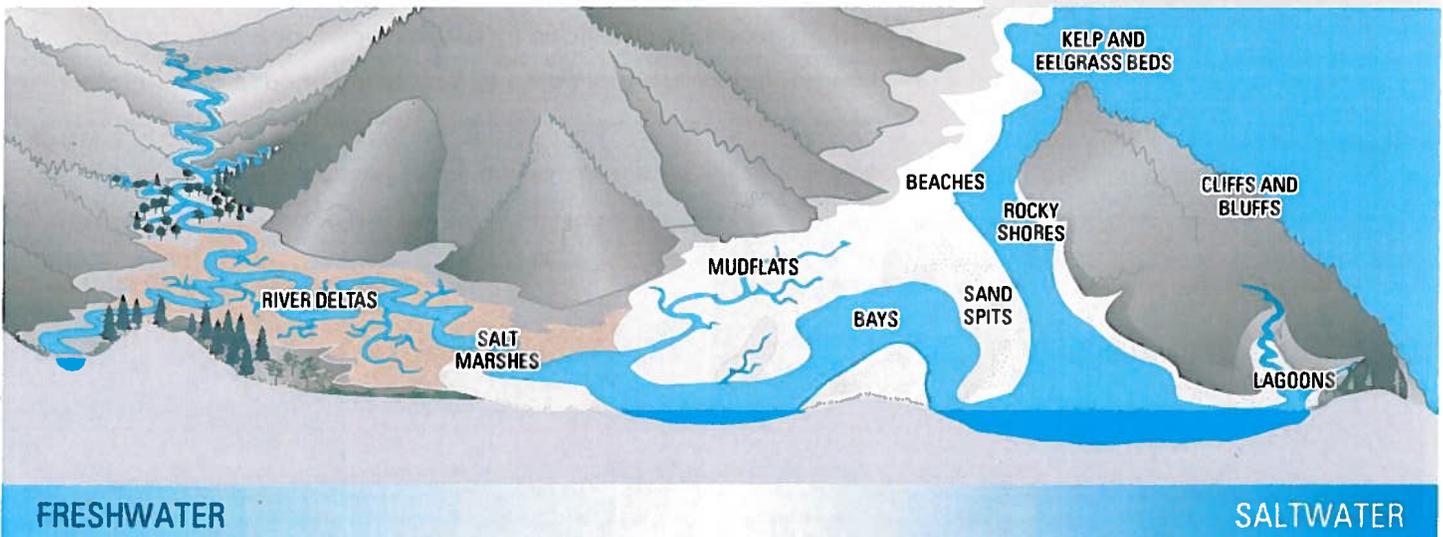


Background

- The Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP) is a large scale restoration initiative designed to remove man-made stressors in the nearshore zone of Puget Sound and restore natural, self-sustaining processes that are integral to supporting the structures and functions that provide ecosystem goods and services.
- The nearshore zone is the transitional area between terrestrial and aquatic (saltwater) ecosystems. It is constrained by geologic features rooted in Puget Sound's formative glacial history. Mountainous uplands transition rapidly to deep saltwater areas resulting in a narrow band of nearshore habitat at the shoreline of Puget Sound.
- The nearshore zone is a biologically rich and productive area supporting a diversity of species throughout the food web including concentrations of waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors; abundant shellfish; marine mammals; and some of the largest salmon runs in the lower 48 states. The nearshore zone provides commercial, recreational and aesthetic benefits to humans that support our livelihood and quality of life.
- The nearshore is also appealing to humans with 67% of Washington's population living in a county that touches Puget Sound. Human development within the nearshore zone and adjacent uplands has resulted in a diverse array of man-made stressors.
- Within the nearshore, stressors that include diking, dredging, filling, and armoring, have displaced, destroyed, or modified nearshore ecosystems.

Six major changes to the physical characteristics of the nearshore have been identified through PSNERP data analysis.

1. Large river deltas have significantly reduced in size (27% decrease in length due to tidal barriers and armoring)
2. 35% of historical coastal embayments have been lost by being filled in or disconnected by tidal barriers
3. Sediment input has been disconnected at beaches/bluffs (over 25% of the shoreline is armored)
4. 74% of tidal wetlands surrounding the shores of Puget Sound have been lost
5. The Puget Sound shoreline has become shorter and more artificial decreasing in length by 15%
6. Many shorelines are experiencing multiple stressors and cumulative impacts



Importance



The shoreline is divided into geomorphic segments called landforms. Priority landforms for restoration efforts, as identified in the Change Analysis technical document include:

- river deltas
- barrier embayments
- coastal inlets
- beaches/bluffs

The diversity of landforms is driven by different underlying processes that create and maintain these landforms.

The mosaic of landforms support ecosystem functions, goods and services valued by humans including ecological, economic, cultural, spiritual, and aesthetic values.

Restoration measures applied across the diversity of landforms will contribute to ensuring a healthy Puget Sound.

- Puget Sound and its adjacent waters support the largest area of remaining estuarine wetlands on the West Coast, exceeding the combined total area of Columbia River and San Francisco Bay estuarine wetlands by over 30%. Because of its size, tidal exchange, and freshwater inputs, Puget Sound supports more than twice the primary productivity of Chesapeake and San Francisco bays combined.
- Recognizing its uniqueness, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated Puget Sound as an “Estuary of National Significance” in 1988.
- The Puget Sound Action Agenda is the federal and state roadmap for restoring the health of Puget Sound by 2020. Proposed restoration by PSNERP is an integral component to achieving Action Agenda recovery targets. The Action Agenda has been approved by EPA as the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Puget Sound under the EPA’s National Estuary Program and has also been endorsed by the Puget Sound Federal Caucus (which includes the Corps of Engineers).
- Nearshore restoration actions that improve habitat function are critical to the recovery and protection of tribal treaty right resources, such as fish and shellfish, in Puget Sound. US v WA and sub-proceedings guaranteed Treaty Tribes 50% of salmon (Boldt decision) and shellfish resources (Rafeedie decision), and confirmed the value of habitat in order to maintain harvestable populations.
- Over a dozen species including fish, mammals and birds, are currently listed as federally endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act are dependent on the ecosystems of Puget Sound and either directly or indirectly on the Puget Sound Nearshore.

RIVER DELTAS



COASTAL INLETS



EMBAYMENTS



BEACHES/BLUFFS



Plan Formulation Strategy

543

Develop comprehensive database of restoration ideas from restoration community.

198

Identify sites in strategic restoration areas that achieve planning objectives.

46

Consult with local proponents to confirm initial site details and interest moving forward/readiness for advancement to conceptual design.

36

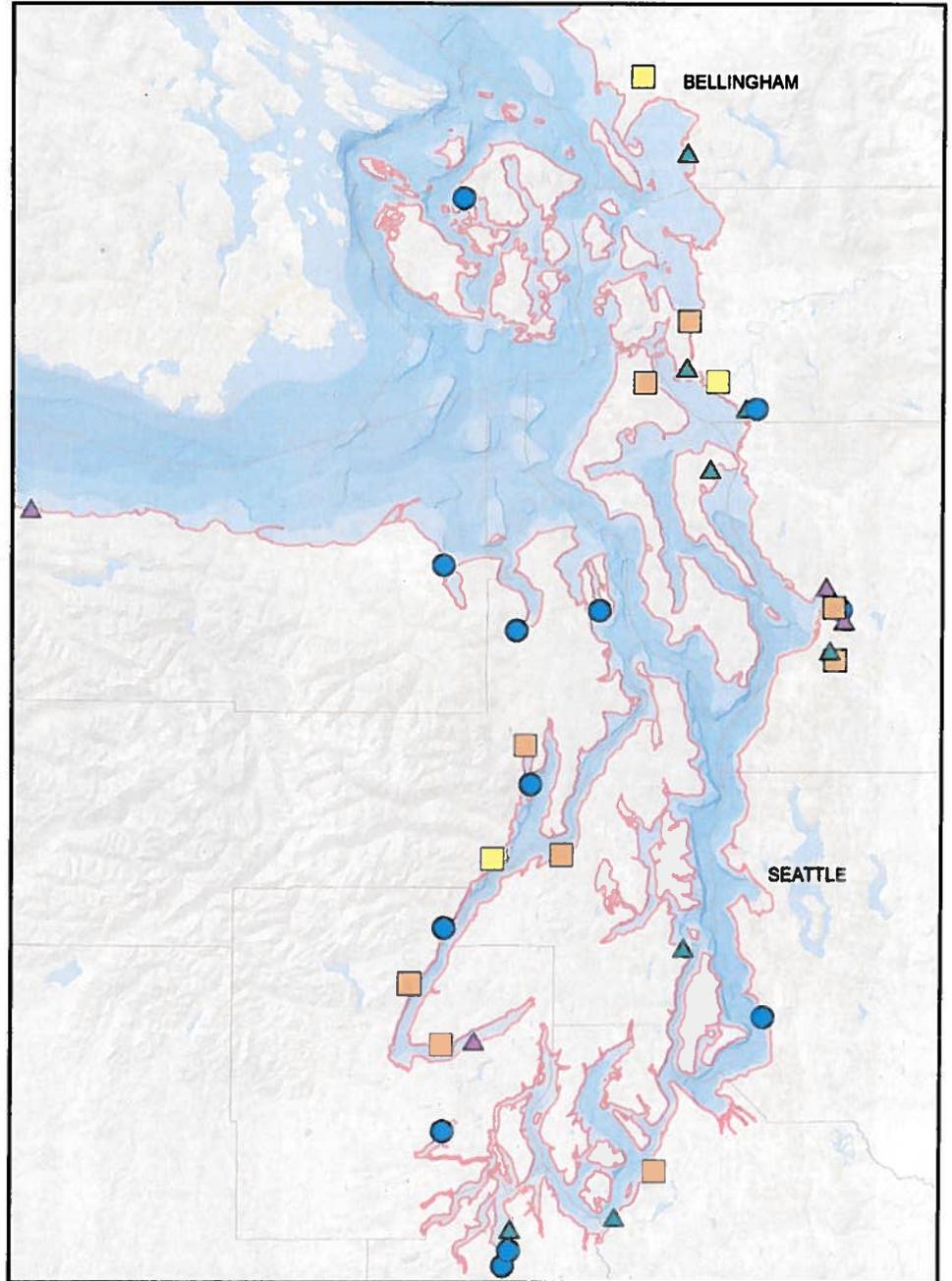
Develop conceptual designs using existing site information.

Tiered Implementation Strategy

Implementation Strategy

PSNERP's planning objectives include:

- Restore the connectivity and size of large river delta estuaries.
- Restore the number and quality of coastal embayments.
- Restore the size and quality of beaches and bluffs.



Tiered Implementation Strategy

▲ Section 544 (Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters) existing authority, \$5M Federal per project limit

■ PSNERP Chief's Report: 3 sites to be finalized for construction authorization

● Projects to be completed by others based on PSNERP design and analysis

▲ Section 206 (Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration) existing authorities, \$10M Federal per project limit

■ PSNERP Chief's Report: 9 sites to be authorized for continued feasibility study

PSNERP

Revised Implementation Framework

New Const. Authority

Duckabush River Estuary
Nooksack River Delta
North Fork Skagit River Delta

GI Tier 1

Big Beef Creek Estuary
Big Quilcene River
Chambers Bay
Duguala Bay
Everett Marshland
Lilliwaup Estuary Restoration
Snohomish Estuary Main Stem
Tahuya River Estuary
Telegraph Slough

GI Tier 2

Existing Authority

Quilceda Estuary
Spencer Island
Twanoh Beach
Twin Rivers

Sec. 544

Chuckanut Estuary
Deepwater Slough
Everett Riverfront Wetland
Harper Estuary
Livingston Bay
McGlinn Island
Sequalitchew Creek
WDNR Budd Inlet Beach

Sec. 206

Non-Corps

Beaconsfield Feeder Bluff
Deer Harbor Estuary
Deschutes River Estuary
Hamma Hamma Estuary
John's Creek Estuary
Kilisut Harbor / Oak Bay
Milltown Island
Mission Creek Estuary
Point Whitney Lagoon
Smith Island Estuary
Snow/Salmon Creek Estuary
Washington Harbor

Other Fund Sources