

Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead

Briefing, May 21, 2024

South Central Action Area Caucus Group

Overview

WDFW and DNR have collaborated since 2011 to bring state agency capacity and expertise to addressing habitat recovery challenges through the Puget Sound National Estuary Program. Our current program, the Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead (HSIL), and its predecessor, the Marine and Nearshore Lead Organization, together have received over \$88 million in EPA Puget Sound funds of which \$65 million will be invested in recovery partners through our grant program by 2028.

The HSIL stewards four Implementation Strategies that underpin the [Puget Sound Action Agenda](#)'s vision for habitat recovery. Implementation Strategies gather the collective voices of the region into a shared vision for recovery. These strategies allow for different communities and diverse watersheds and geographies to be integrated in a strategic framework that elevates approaches and policies based upon our current understanding of the functioning of communities and ecosystems.

Guided by the Habitat Implementation Strategies, the HSIL works to enable and accelerate habitat protection and restoration in Puget Sound. We work to convene, create, and support partnerships that will advance Puget Sound recovery. Through our grant program, the HSIL funds activities essential to enable the capacity for and development of programs, policies, and information necessary to implement conservation and restoration actions.

Highlighted Grants:

The highlighted grants focus on outcomes identified in the Floodplains and Estuaries and Land Development and Cover Implementation Strategies. These include market programs that encourage habitat protection and restoration; incorporating protection into regional infrastructure planning; incorporating watershed processes and protection across jurisdictions; and designing infrastructure to limit population growth in ecologically important lands; mobilizing funding to advance integrated management restoration outcomes; and advancing reach-scale and watershed-scale restoration planning.

Carbon Credits Regional Operator, Bonneville Environmental Foundation

Partners: Skagit Conservation District, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, Whatcom County, Mountain to Sound Greenway Trust, City of Sumner, City Forest Credits, Puget Sound Partnership, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8), Tulalip Tribes

Most restoration organizations across the Puget Sound do not have the capacity to register their restoration projects into carbon certification programs, conduct the required long-term monitoring, and then sell the credits to support ongoing stewardship. A "regional operator" to support these capacity needs across the region is essential to scale this program across Puget Sound and Washington State, enabling this significant funding opportunity for restoration stewardship. This project will create a replicable program to help restoration practitioners navigate their restoration projects through the carbon credit registry and certification process, creating a long-term funding mechanism for habitat monitoring, maintenance, and stewardship. The subrecipient will also identify agency policy barriers and develop recommendations for revisions to agency



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policy and funding programs to allow carbon credit registration, certification, and sale as a key component of habitat restoration programs in Washington State. This project will also identify a long-term funding model for securing sustainable funding for a carbon credits regional operator into the future.

Factsheet: <https://pspwa.box.com/s/ewxvgidu2pv8cnfht9kpxjidd4w0bgct>

Contact: Allan Warren, awarren@b-e-f.org

Flexible State Funding Sources Convening, Bonneville Environmental Foundation

Partners: Forterra, WA Association of Land Trusts, Pierce County, King County, Recreation and Conservation Office, Department of Ecology, Jefferson County Commission, WA Association of Counties, Puget Sound Partnership, State Conservation Commission, WA Farmland Trust, Snohomish County

The Growth Management Act (and RCWs 43.362 and 39.108) authorizes and encourages transfer of development rights (TDR). This voluntary, market-based real estate tool allows landowners to sell development potential from farms and forests to areas designated for denser development, thereby permanently conserving the farms and forests. Due to policy constraints, lands purchased through state agency funding programs have not been enrolled in TDR programs, even when the lands are purchased for permanent protection. There is an opportunity to promote TDR program participation with lands purchased using state funds and to increase the impact of state funds for conservation by using the proceeds from the sale of development rights to fund additional acquisition or stewardship. The subrecipient will convene partners to analyze challenges and develop grant guidelines and/or policy solutions to create more flexibility around TDR credit opportunities.

Factsheet: <https://pspwa.box.com/s/p9gf4rwuk0z3m6bc2soprewj4pbzio9b>

Contact: Allan Warren, awarren@b-e-f.org

Kitsap Natural Resources Asset Management Program, Kitsap County

Partners: Suquamish Tribe, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Washington Environmental Council, Wild Fish Conservancy

This project will refine, pilot, and implement the Kitsap Natural Resource Asset Management Program (KNRAMP). The KNRAMP is a new framework to manage natural assets (such as forests, streams, and shorelines) using the same asset management and capital improvements principles that municipalities use to manage built infrastructure. The KNRAMP provides a mechanism to incorporate nature-based solutions and green infrastructure practices into traditional infrastructure planning and uses ecosystem services principles to quantify the “level of service” (LOS) provided by natural resources, using similar terminology to what is used by public works departments for prioritizing investments in built infrastructure.

Factsheet: <https://pspwa.box.com/s/0m0ogmurvzcwld8cifgsq9tkz40y7rv7>

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Resources:

HSIL Funded Projects: <https://pugetsoundestuary.wa.gov/all-funded-projects/>

Sound Choices Checklist: <https://pspwa.box.com/v/SoundChoicesChecklist2023>

Overview booklet of Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead investments from 2016-2023 produced by Puget Sound Institute: <https://www.eopugetsound.org/articles/habitat-protection-and-restoration-puget-sound-overview-strategic-initiative-lead>

Salish Sea Current Magazine series featuring funding HSIL work:

<https://www.eopugetsound.org/magazine/series/series-habitat-protection-and-restoration/HSIL>

Puget Sound Institute Blog highlighting HSIL funded projects supporting local habitat protection, monitoring, and adaptive management: <https://www.pugetsoundinstitute.org/resources-for-local-habitat-protection-monitoring-and-adaptive-management/>

Current and Upcoming Funding Opportunities: <https://pugetsoundestuary.wa.gov/rfp/>

Learn more about the Habitat Implementation Strategies: [Floodplains & Estuaries](#), [Shoreline Armoring](#), [Land Development & Cover](#), and [Marine Vegetation](#)

