

University Sound Partnership

Educating the Public for the Health and Recovery of Puget Sound

The Challenge

Puget Sound is central to Washington's heritage, culture, and quality of life, contributing billions of dollars to the state's economy. The Sound's key social, environmental and economic importance is tied directly to its well-being and wealth of natural resources. Unfortunately, many of its natural resources are declining and others are threatened. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the health of Puget Sound is the lack of awareness and understanding by the general public. Further, by 2020, the region's population is expected to grow by 1.4 million from the present 3.8 million. Such growth will put increased pressure on the Sound and, without action now, could jeopardize its environment.

Governor Gregoire established the Puget Sound Partnership in late 2005, bringing together Washington leaders to develop a strategy for protecting and restoring the health of the Sound. The Governor stated, "Cleaning and protecting Puget Sound must be at the top of our agenda. But I know from experience that state government can't do it alone."

Recognizing that citizen involvement would be critical to its success, the Partnership commissioned an analysis of public opinion about environmental issues in the region

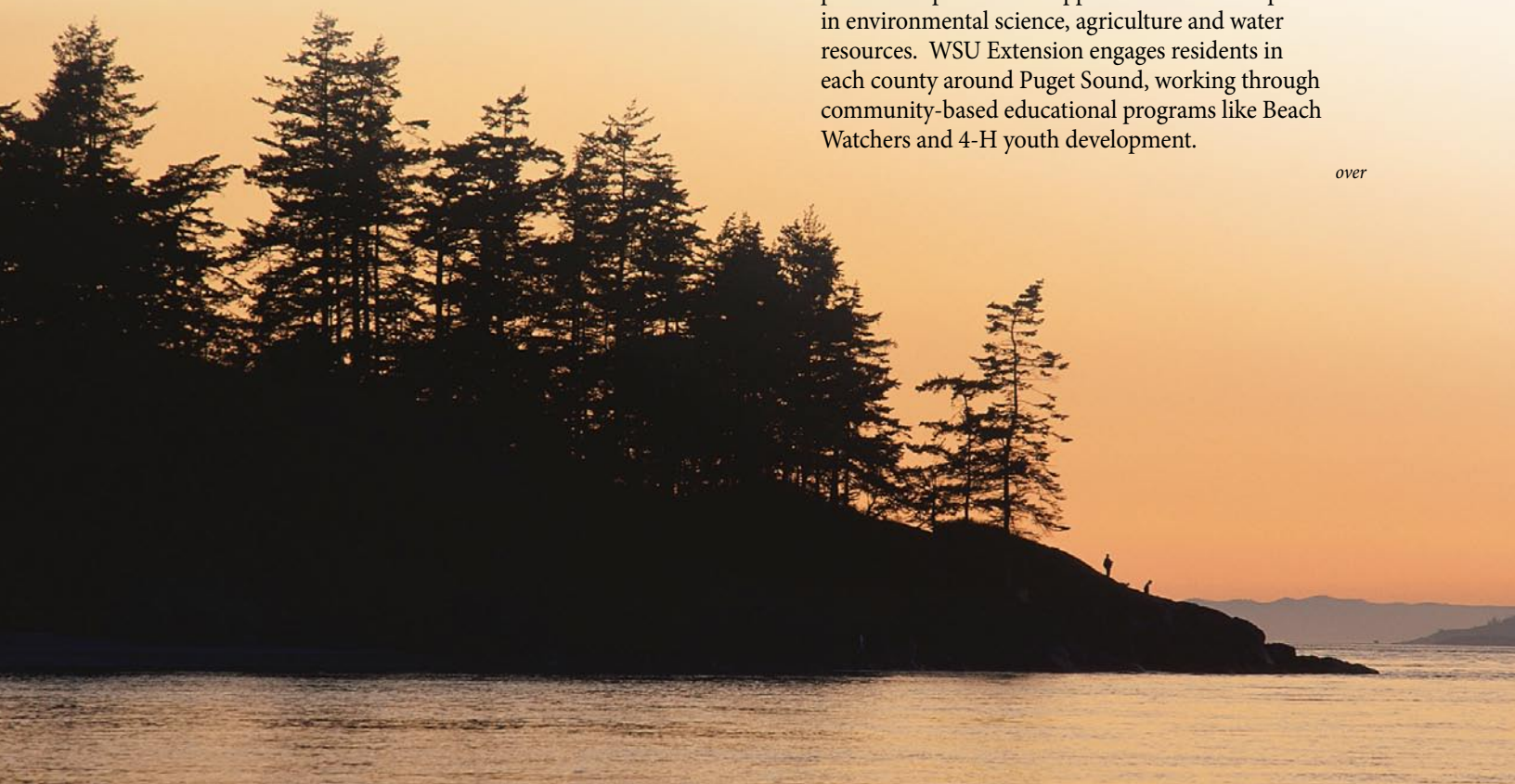
and across the nation. The results of that analysis found no sense of urgency or great concern for protecting and restoring Puget Sound. We know, however, that people are most likely to take action when they are fully aware and understand problems and when they believe they can make a difference.

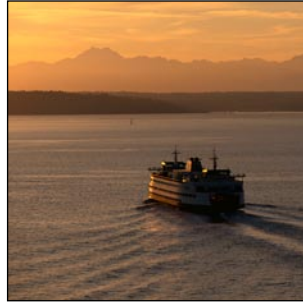
The University Partnership

We propose to leverage the knowledge base of the state's two research universities to engage the public and change harmful behaviors toward Puget Sound. Together, the University of Washington and Washington State University can provide comprehensive and complementary science, education and outreach:

- University of Washington scientists lead the world in research on fisheries, oceanography, biology and water resources. For almost four decades, Washington Sea Grant has translated university science into practical tools for people who live and work in the Puget Sound region.
- Washington State University Extension couples practical expertise with applied research and specialists in environmental science, agriculture and water resources. WSU Extension engages residents in each county around Puget Sound, working through community-based educational programs like Beach Watchers and 4-H youth development.

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- Both Universities are tied to local governments through issue-based programming driven by community needs. This strong working relationship is embodied in successful collaborations like the Policy Consensus Center, forest resources extension and Center for Urban Horticulture.

The Approach

The University Sound Partnership will be an education, outreach and advisory program to catalyze measurable local responses for conserving Puget Sound. Our goal is to implement pragmatic solutions to high-priority concerns, such as managing stormwater, reducing pollution, protecting and restoring habitat, preserving clean water, protecting fish and wildlife, and promoting sustainable development. We will collaborate with tribes, government agencies, schools, environmental groups, businesses and other constituents.

Over the next five years, the University Sound Partnership will:

1. Build and train a 10,000-member volunteer network to serve as stewards and educators in communities throughout Puget Sound.
2. Establish a diverse team of scientific experts on critical Puget Sound issues to support the network and engage and educate communities.
3. Develop an effective system for university faculty and students to translate science into usable information for delivery to the public.
4. Coordinate community-based education efforts and engage teachers and students of all ages in critical thinking and practices that change behavior.
5. Monitor and evaluate the education, outreach, and advisory program's positive effect on public behavior.

Outcomes

Over the next five years, the University Sound Partnership will work to ensure that:

1. Puget Sound residents put more than 1 million hours into public service activities like restoration, research, monitoring, and education.
2. Homeowner implementation of shore and watershed stewardship guidelines, including guidelines on septic systems, water conservation, lawn applications, and low impact development, increases ten-fold.
3. Public understanding and support for science-based

action to conserve and protect Puget Sound improves measurably.

4. Twenty thousand K-12 students receive three-hour intensive education experiences on the Puget Sound environment, including their impacts on it.
5. At least half of all farms, marinas, and maritime businesses implement best management practices to protect critical areas and improve water quality.

Annual Budget

Volunteer Coordinator in each of
12 counties and at each university
and one tribal coordinator 15 FTE \$1.2 million

Scientific experts in these possible areas:

*aquatic nuisance species/ballast water;
climate change; environmental economics;
geography/planning; K-12 marine education;
low impact development; marine biology;
marine habitat; septic systems;
shellfish/aquaculture;
shoreline geology; stormwater.* 8 FTE \$800,000

Evaluation \$250,000

Support for student and faculty
participation \$200,000

Communications/education/materials \$150,000

Total \$2.6 million

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