

## Puget Sound Solutions

In an all-hands-on-deck effort, the government, the private sector and nonprofit organizations from Bellingham to Seattle to Port Townsend have teamed up to restore Puget Sound by 2020. Complementary and coordinated campaigns are getting underway to engage the public in this important effort. In broad terms, the state government will focus on public education and the nonprofit community will take on the public involvement aspect to this massive and historic endeavor.



The Mud Monster hams it up with Gov. Gregoire in Des Moines, May 2007. Photo by Eric Mathison

### Engaging the public through the MudUp campaign

The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy and People For Puget Sound are working together for the first time in an historic partnership called the Alliance for Puget Sound Shorelines. The Alliance conceived of the idea of creating a single, centralized place, MudUp.org, where individuals and groups can post and find ways to help the Sound. Silicon Forest meets Puget Sound. Because when it comes to the Sound—your Sound—it’s all or nothing. And with activities for young and old, families and weekend mud warriors, it’ll be all-out fun. So MudUp! It’s time to get dirty for the Sound.

### What the public can do through MudUp.org:

- Volunteer to restore Puget Sound wildlife habitat and shorelines through MudUp.org and replace invasive species with native plants, restore trails and remove litter and garbage.
- Get involved on the local and state level. Advocate for more parks and natural areas in your community and request restoration of damaged and polluted shorelines in your area.
- Support MudUp and its goal to create 10 new parks, protect 1,000 miles of shoreline and restore 100 miles of shoreline by June, 2009.
- Find links to other groups who have compiled suggestions of what you can do to help save Puget Sound (e.g. wash your car on the lawn or at a carwash to keep chemicals out of storm drains, schedule annual checks of your septic system, or use non-toxic alternatives to pesticides for lawn care).
- Many, many more activities with different levels of “muddiness.”

### State restoration plan, approved by Governor Gregoire in May, 2007:

- *Clean up & prevent toxics*: \$54.7 million to clean up contaminated sites and phase out toxic flame retardants, which are known to be harmful to human health and marine life.
- *Restore damaged shorelines*: \$37.4 million to restore shorelines for salmon and other species and remove derelict vessels.
- *Reduce stormwater runoff*: \$25.3 million to help cities and counties meet new stormwater standards and reduce the flow of toxic chemicals into waterways.
- *Clean up septic pollution*: \$56.3 million to upgrade poorly-maintained septic systems, encourage water reuse and implement shellfish protection plans.
- *Protect essential habitat*: \$40.7 million to protect habitat that is essential to the survival of marine life along streams, marine shorelines, flood plains and forested areas. A pilot project will be launched to better enforce existing habitat protection laws.
- *Citizen partnership*: \$5.8 million to promote conservation activities and public education through community organizations.

**Total: \$220.2 million** (Source: [Governor Gregoire’s Office](#))

### Public education plan

The state found that public awareness about the Puget Sound’s environmental health is at about 25%. The Puget Sound Partnership will launch a public education campaign to target people through TV and radio ads, web outreach and a printed *Field Guide to Puget Sound*, which will educate the public on problems that we all have a responsibility to confront, like stormwater pollution, outdated septic systems and oil spills.

## Puget Sound Problems

From the public's point of view, problems plaguing the Puget Sound are often met with the same amount of skepticism as the existence of the Mud Monster—"No way!" Yup. Puget Sound is one of the most damaged, polluted waterways in the country. Just ask any of the salmon, orcas and shellfish who are struggling for survival—oh wait, you can't. Well, here are some facts and figures that tell their story:

### Habitat Loss and Human Development

- Seventy-five percent of the Sound's salt marsh habitat has been destroyed, and one third of the shoreline altered or engineered from its natural state. (Source: Washington Department of Ecology)
- It's no wonder Washington's salmon have got "issues." Native plants and wildlife have had to "move over" for human development like bulkheads that now edge about one third of the total Puget Sound shoreline, resulting in damaged beaches and estuaries. Rapid-paced development disrupts stream flows, which can affect migration and spawning of threatened salmon. (Source: Washington Department of Ecology)
- We want to give our beautiful native plants room to grow. That's why MudUp's plant posse will seek and destroy human-introduced invasive species like ivy and spartina, which have spread aggressively to nearly every county in the Sound.
- We all know that orcas can put up a good fight, but not against toxic chemicals! Failing septic systems, farm runoff, pet wastes and other human activities are cited as causes for bacteria and viruses contaminating our water supplies. This waste is carried by stormwater runoff into area waters. Toxic chemicals found in bottom sediment have been known to affect the health of orcas and some of their favorite food, salmon. (Source: [www.pugetsound.org](http://www.pugetsound.org))

### Our Web of Life

- Problems in the Puget Sound affect everyone—from the tiniest plankton to the fishermen who make our economy strong. Washington's shellfish industry brings in about \$40 million a year, but in 2006 the state put 23 commercial growing areas on its threatened list. (Source: Washington Department of Environmental Health)
- Even the health of the region's beloved orca whales, declared endangered in 2005, is connected to shorelines, because shorelines are the basis for a food web that feeds salmon and, ultimately, orcas.
- Wish you could just go out and get some clams or oysters for dinner? First you'd have to find a public beach. Which isn't easy. Only about 10 percent of the shoreline is accessible to the public. And then you have to consider that so many beaches are closed to harvest due to pollution and marine biotoxins, making recreational harvesting increasingly difficult. That's one of the reasons why the state's Puget Sound cleanup campaign aims to make shellfish safe to eat again for Puget Sound residents and tourists. (Source: Washington Department of Environmental Health)

MudUp is all about reclaiming healthy shorelines for the people and wildlife that love living around Puget Sound – working together we can do better!

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