



Snohomish County

Conservation and Natural Resources

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Snohomish County Celebrates 10 Years of Restoration Progress in Port Susan; More Than 520 Acres of River Delta Restored

New online resource highlights progress and what's next for one of the Salish Sea's last remaining biodiversity hotspots.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash., September 20, 2023 – Over the last 10 years, multiple agencies have worked together towards maintaining and restoring [Port Susan](#). This area offers important habitat for endangered species and is a refuge of biodiversity. A new website: [Ten Years of Progress: Port Susan's Conservation Action Plan](#), celebrates recovery efforts and highlights key restoration actions in Port Susan as well as additional work that is still needed. The past decade of conservation work was guided by the 2012 [Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation Action Plan](#) (CAP).

Highlights of Port Susan conservation progress since 2012:

- 523 acres of river delta restored (more than 2.5 times the 10-year CAP goal)
- Fish access restored to 1.75 miles of streams; this is crucial for threatened Puget Sound Chinook populations
- Nine shore-friendly workshops hosted, that helped educate more than 500 participants
- 100 site visits to assess options to reduce shoreline hardening

“Port Susan is one of Snohomish County’s environmental jewels and reflects the importance of preserving biodiversity and supporting endangered species,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “Restoration efforts like the one undertaken at Port Susan is vital for protecting our environment and has broad benefits across our community and economy. I’m grateful to County staff and our community partners for the progress achieved to-date, and I encourage all residents to explore this website and learn more about Port Susan and its impact on our environment.”

The CAP serves as a planning tool outlining conservation targets, threats, and strategies to achieve conservation goals, centered around species and environments most in need of protection in the voluntary Marine Stewardship Area. The plan outlines objectives and the necessary strategic actions to improve key species and habitats: the river delta, Chinook salmon, beaches/forage fish, Dungeness crab, shellfish and shorebirds.

“Port Susan is an incredible ecological asset to North Snohomish County and the entire state. The work the County and our partners are doing at Port Susan ensures we can increase water quality and maintain biodiverse habitats for the many species who call our waters home, including young salmon and migrating gray whales,” said Snohomish County Council Vice Chair Nate Nehring ([District 1](#)). “This new resource provides a transparent, accessible tool for residents and businesses to learn more about this important part of our county’s environment.”

“These target species and habitats are integral to our region, and it’s promising that we’ve made such great progress in certain areas,” said Elisa Dawson, Snohomish County Surface Water Management (SWM) Senior Planner. “Maintaining the health of Port Susan is an ongoing process that will involve collaboration among government agencies, tribes, landowners, conservation partners, and the community alike.”

“It has been an inspiring process to be a part of because so many different groups have come together to protect this unique ecosystem,” said Dr. Sara Maxwell, member of the Snohomish County Marine Resource Committee and professor at University of Washington Bothell.

Over the next ten years, partners will continue working to increase the resiliency of the Port Susan ecosystem. Current and future actions include salt marsh restoration, monitoring and research on fish, seals, and bird population, shellfish enhancement, and promoting best management practices with shoreline landowners.

Port Susan is located between Camano Island and northern Snohomish County. In 2012, prompted by a shared regionwide vision to protect important marine resources, Snohomish and Island County MRCs and a collaboration of partners representing tribes, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and state and federal agencies, created the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation Action Plan (CAP).

This project was made possible by funding from the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

About the Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee

The Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is a service provided by Snohomish County Surface Water Management, a division of Conservation and Natural Resources. The MRC’s goal is to understand, protect, and restore the marine and estuarine ecosystems of the county. Local citizens appointed by the Snohomish County Council use science-based information to develop and implement projects and help shape local and regional marine conservation policy. MRC members work to complement ongoing efforts by both government and nonprofit agencies. There are seven MRCs in the Northwest Straits region of the Puget Sound. For more information, visit www.snocomrc.org.

About Snohomish County Conservation and Natural Resources

The Snohomish County Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) includes the Division of Surface Water Management; the Division of Parks and Recreation; the Office of Energy and Sustainability and the Office of Agriculture. DCNR works in support of thriving communities; a clean and healthy environment to foster environmental stewardship; ensuring food security; supporting a green economy, and strengthening communities by providing regional parks and infrastructure; protecting the region's water, air, land and natural habitats; enhancing agriculture and recreation; and reducing flooding. <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/5758>.

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