

Climate Change and Cleanup



Photo courtesy of Dawne Gardiska

Why It Matters

Tackling climate change is a priority for Ecology. We are working to protect human health and our natural resources from the impacts of climate change in Washington state.

Climate change can impact our communities, infrastructure, and the resources we enjoy and depend on. Ecology is taking steps to address the causes of climate change, but we need to prepare for and respond to its impacts.

Our state faces serious impacts from climate change including:

- Sea level rise
- More severe flooding
- More frequent, intense wildfires
- Increased landslide and erosion
- More severe drought

By acting now to address impacts to infrastructure and the environment related to climate change, we can limit damage and reduce long-term costs.

To access the guidance go here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ClimateCleanupReport>

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Now Available

Ecology's Guidance to Increase Resilience of Cleanup Sites to Climate Change

Why is this guidance necessary? Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program manages the cleanup of contaminated sites to protect human health and the environment—now and in the future. Our ability to prepare for the impacts of climate change is critical. By improving the resilience of cleanup remedies to climate change impacts, we can help ensure that our efforts are effective in the long-term. By accounting for regionally specific climate change impacts like sea level rise, we can better protect the significant investment in the time, resources, and money that make cleanup happen.

What is in the guidance? This guidance will help cleanup project managers assess the risks posed by our changing climate (a site-specific vulnerability assessment) and help them to identify adaptation measures that increase climate-resilience across a range of cleanup sites (a site-specific adaptation strategy). Implementing adaptation measures during early stages of the cleanup process may increase the feasible cleanup options, maximize their integrity, and reduce costs in some situations.

Results from a state-wide vulnerability assessment are included in the guidance to understand what types of cleanup sites and remedies are most vulnerable to a range of projected climate impacts including: sea level rise, severe flooding, landslide and increased erosion, wildfire, and drought.

How will this guidance be used? We developed this guidance to help cleanup project managers:

- 1) Assess how aspects of cleanup sites may be vulnerable to climate change on a site-specific basis.
- 2) Increase climate-resilience of cleanup sites by using the recommended adaptation actions specific to each stage of cleanup.





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To learn about other Ecology initiatives on climate change, visit our website here:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/>

Additional Information

- [Climate Change in Puget Sound](#)
- [University of Washington Climate Impacts Group](#)
- [Washington's Blue Ribbon Panel Report](#)

Accommodation Requests

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 800-826-7716.

Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711.

Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

How is this guidance organized?

The guidance includes information on:

- Climate trends and projections for Washington state.
- Details on the vulnerability assessment we conducted to assess risks to cleanup sites.
- Information on specific types of cleanup sites that are vulnerable to climate change.
- Recommendations to increase climate-resilience of cleanup sites at each phase of cleanup.
- Case studies of how Ecology has addressed climate change in its cleanup efforts.
- Additional resources on climate-resiliency and adaptation plans.

How did this guidance come about?

Recognizing Washington's vulnerability to climate change impacts, in 2008 the Washington State Legislature directed state agencies to develop an integrated climate change response strategy. The goal was to enable state and local agencies, public and private businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to prepare for, address, and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

In 2009, Governor Gregoire issued Executive Order 09-05 followed in 2014 by Governor Inslee's Executive Order 14-04 that reinforced the Legislature's directive. Ecology led the development of the response strategy: [Preparing for a Changing Climate: Washington State's Integrated Climate Change Response Strategy \(2012\)](#). This has served as a guide for agencies and an opportunity to collaborate and develop partnerships.

To implement this response strategy, agencies have improved coordination and collaboration on climate change. An Interagency Climate Adaptation Network was formed by state agencies to share information and best practices, showcase examples of state agency climate adaptation projects, identify opportunities to strengthen the state's climate readiness, and spark ongoing interactions about advancing adaptation.

