

# Focus on: Watershed Health Monitoring 2021



*Hamma Hamma River, Mason County*

## More information

Water-dwelling species need healthy streams, rivers, and watersheds to thrive. Ecology's Watershed Health Monitoring program gathers information about their habitats to ensure their protection and recovery.

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## Special accommodations

To request ADA accommodation, call the Ecology ADA Coordinator at 360-407-6831 or visit [Ecology's accessibility web page](https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility) ([ecology.wa.gov/accessibility](https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility)).

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

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

## Stream surveys in the Puget Sound region during 2021

The Watershed Health Monitoring program assesses streams and rivers across Washington State to obtain a consistent, objective picture of habitat and biological conditions. The program tracks these conditions over time to answer important questions about the overall function and health of our watersheds.

Department of Ecology (Ecology) scientists determine watershed health by (1) measuring the physical, chemical, and biological components of Washington's streams and rivers and (2) analyzing the data for key factors and conditions that affect the success of aquatic species.

### Surveys cover biology, chemistry, and physical habitat

During our site visits, we collect information on fish, amphibians, macroinvertebrates, and algae. The status of these organisms and their communities gives us insight into how the watershed is functioning. We also gather chemical and physical habitat data to help give us a complete picture of stream and riparian conditions.

### Randomized sampling builds watershed-wide view

To monitor the status and trends of an entire watershed, we use a statistical survey design that allows us to accurately describe large geographic regions. Instead of surveying every stream, we randomly choose sample sites that represent the overall stream network.

### Project returns to the Puget Sound region in 2021

Ecology scientists sample eight regions across the state on a rotating basis. In 2021, we will collect samples at 50 streams and rivers in the



Many species inhabit streams, including this rough-skinned newt (*Taricha granulosa*) from a stream in Snohomish County.

Puget Sound region from July 1 through October 15. We previously sampled this region in 2009 and 2013. The map below shows where we have been. We planned to sample the region in 2020 but restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic prohibited our work.

### Ecology field crews respect private property

Ecology staff always ask landowners for permission to access streams on their property. Our employees will not enter private lands unless landowners grant permission.

### Watershed Health Monitoring since 2009

The Watershed Health Monitoring program was established in 2009 to meet goals of the state’s Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy for Watershed Health and Salmon Recovery. Our monitoring program was designed with direction from Washington’s Monitoring Forum, a multiagency group responsible for coordinating actions related to monitoring watershed health and recovery of aquatic species.

You can learn more and find data at:

[Ecology's Watershed health monitoring web page.](#)

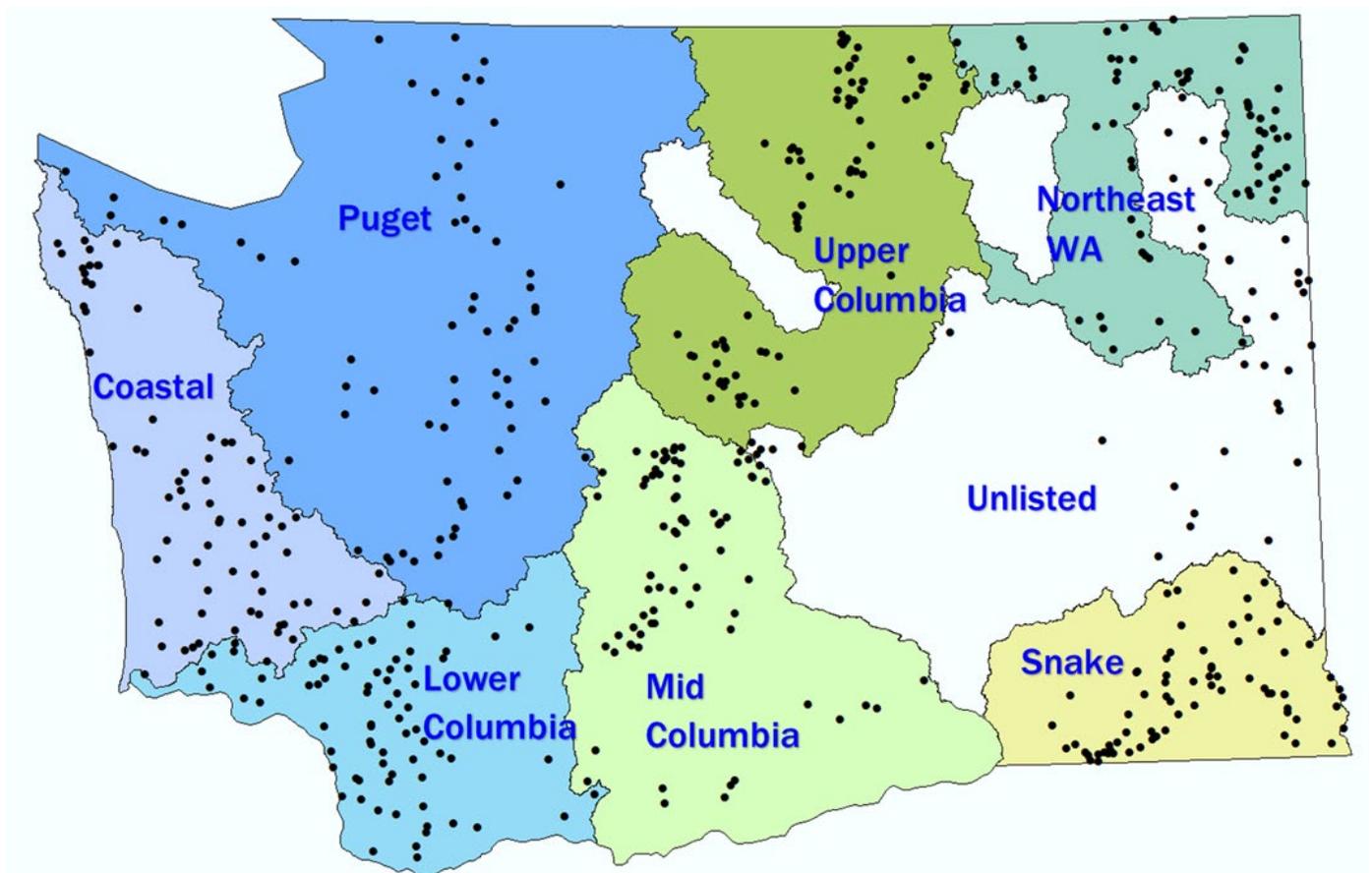


Figure 1. Map of 544 sites sampled since 2009, shown by region.