

Shorelands and Environmental Assistance

Focus on protecting and managing areas where land and water meet

Shorelands: Where land and water meet

Ecology's Shorelands and Environmental Assistance (SEA) Program focuses on statewide activities aimed at managing and protecting the areas in Washington where land and water meet, including:

- 28,000 miles of river, lake, and marine shoreline across the state.
- Hundreds of thousands of acres of [wetlands](#).
- Dozens of river basin [floodplains](#).

To be successful, we develop and foster close partnerships with local and Tribal governments, state and federal agencies, academic institutions and nonprofit entities, businesses and environmental community, and the public.



Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls.

Partnerships are vital

Building and maintaining partnerships is essential because:

- We approve locally tailored [shoreline master programs](#) that guide statewide shoreline development and protection.

- We use our federal [Clean Water Act](#) and [Coastal Zone Management Act](#) authorities to evaluate and certify projects, actions, and activities to ensure they will not harm state water quality or the coastal zone.
- We administer the [State Environmental Policy Act](#) identifying and analyzing impacts associated with governmental decisions, plans, and policies.
- We oversee a [significant grant program](#) that helps local and Tribal partners reduce their flood risks while restoring aquatic ecosystems.
- We conduct surveys to [map and monitor](#) Washington's marine coastline and sea floor to track changes in coastal morphology over time.
- We are responsible for addressing [coastal hazards](#) such as flooding, erosion, and sea level rise on the Pacific Ocean coast.
- We manage more than 300 [Washington Conservation Corps](#) volunteers who complete environmental restoration projects across Washington and respond to natural disasters in and outside the state.

Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

The SEA Program also includes the [Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) in Skagit County — one of 30 federal coastal reserves in the nation and the only one in Washington.

- We own and operate the 12,000-acre Reserve through a cooperative agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

- Besides 8,000 acres of eelgrass, the Reserve includes an environmental education and interpretive center, touch pool and aquarium, research laboratories, and upland trails.
- The Reserve is a leader for coastal ecosystem research and monitoring as well as invasive species management and control.
- We provide educational and outdoor experiences for more than 10,000 public visitors and K-12 students annually.
- We also offer technical assistance and training for hundreds of coastal zone management practitioners across the state.



Youngster examining mud flat creatures at Padilla Bay.

Northwest Straits Commission

The [Northwest Straits Commission](#) is also located at the Reserve. The Commission:

- Provides funding, training, and support to seven county-based Marine Resources Committees that deliver coastal restoration, education, and monitoring projects.

- Facilitates regional coordination and connects committee work to regional planning processes like the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda.
- Manages regional projects such as training volunteers to identify forage fish spawning sites and trap invasive European green crab.

Regional information

Besides our main office in Lacey, the SEA Program has four regional offices providing services for our partners and public.



- **Southwest Region** (Lacey) covers *Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, and Wahkiakum counties.*
- **Northwest Region** (Shoreline) covers *Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties.*
- **Central Region** (Union Gap) covers *Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, and Yakima counties.*
- **Eastern Region** (Spokane) covers *Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties.*



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For Relay Service or TTY, call 711 or 877 833 6341.