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Island County

Serving the communities of Camano & Whidbey Islands

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April 2023 Natural Resources Newsletter

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Natural Resources Newsletter

April 2023

Announcements

Whidbey Earth and Ocean Month

Since 2006, Whidbey Earth and Ocean Month has been celebrated every April on Whidbey Island with an increasingly large variety of volunteer events and activities. This year, there will be **more than 40 events** happening all over Whidbey Island! To view the event calendar, click [HERE](#). By combining education, community, and action, we can help to keep Whidbey Island beautiful!!



Image: 2010 Peace Picture from whidbeyearthday.org

Whidbey 101

After many years, the Whidbey 101 community resource fair is back! The focus of this year's event is **resilient living**. [Island County DNR](#) will have multiple tables at this year's Whidbey 101 with educational materials from all of its programs! The event will run from **10:00AM-1:00PM on Saturday April 29th, 2023** at the **Trinity Lutheran Fellowship Hall** in **Freeland**.

WSU PRESENTS



WHIDBEY 101

Living on an Island

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO
LIVE ON WHIDBEY ISLAND

**Up-to-Date Talks and
Information Tables**
Presented by:

 WSU EXTENSION
Island County

 Island Transit

and participating partners:

 WHIDBEY ISLAND
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

 SOUND WATER
STEWARDS

 ISLAND COUNTY
MARINE RESOURCES
COMMISSION

**Saturday,
April 29, 2023
10:00-1:00**

TRINITY LUTHERAN
FELLOWSHIP HALL
18341 St. Rt. 525
Freeland

WSU relates that "if you live on Whidbey, especially if you just moved here, this **free event** will help you settle in. Find out about the best trails, how to live with a septic system and what programs are available for seniors. Learn about the free bus system, how to manage yard waste and recyclables, prepare for emergencies, prune an orchard, start a garden, or landscape for wildlife. Volunteer to help clean beaches, maintain trails, greet park visitors. Sign up for educational programs, or get expert advice on forest or pasture management, all in the lovely Trinity Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall. Bring your questions and meet your neighbors." Click [HERE](#) to learn more!

New Staff

Jessica Reed joined the DNR team in January as the Watershed Planner.

Jessica grew up on Whidbey Island and was able to experience the natural beauty of its parks and protected lands from an early age. Her love and appreciation of the biodiversity we have here on Whidbey Island led her to pursue a career in ecological conservation.

Jessica has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology, with an emphasis on organismal, ecology, and evolution, and has worked in various environmental fields through the years. Jessica is thrilled to join the Island County Department of Natural Resources as the Watershed Planner, and work side by side with the Surface Water Quality team and Lead Entity for Salmon Recovery.



Madison Evans has returned this spring to assist Seth Luginbill with the Noxious Weed Control program! Most of the work that Madison will be doing will be to find noxious weeds and either remove them or find a way to control and manage them. Madison was born and raised on Whidbey Island, a fourth generation Islander! He has always enjoyed being outside and he enjoys taking care of plants in his free time. Welcome back Madison!

National Wildlife Week

This year, **April 3rd through April 9th** marks National Wildlife Week! The National Wildlife Federation's website relates that they have partnered with Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom again this year "to promote wildlife conservation and to inspire people to protect wildlife. Every species plays a key role in keeping our ecosystems healthy. All of us can

make a difference by taking simple conservation action to keep wildlife and their playgrounds safe." To learn more about National Wildlife Week, click [HERE!](#)

THE ICONIC WILDLIFE SERIES IS BACK!



Programmatic Updates

Island Local Integrating Organization (ILIO)

The next ILIO Technical Committee meetings will be held on **Tuesday, April 11th from 1:00PM-3:00PM** and **Tuesday, May 9th from 1:00PM-3:00PM** via Zoom. If you would like to join either of the meetings, please contact Clea Barenburg at c.barenburg@islandcountywa.gov.

Be sure to check [ILIO's website](#) for upcoming meeting agendas and minutes.

Marine Resources Committee (MRC)

The Island County Marine Resources Committee is proud to present its [2021-2022 Annual Report](#) and its [2021-2024 Strategic Plan](#)! In the past year, the committee has put a lot of effort into defining where it needs to be focusing its energy. The committee looks forward to continuing to educate the community about the issues and successes related to Island County's beautiful marine resources.

The next Island County MRC meeting will be on **Tuesday, May 2nd from 3:00-5:00PM** via Zoom. If you would like to join the meeting, contact the Marine Resources Committee Coordinator Kelly Zupich at k.zupich@islandcountywa.gov.

Be sure to check [MRC's website](#) for upcoming meetings, agendas, and minutes.

Salmon Recovery

SRTCC recently held virtual presentations for the four projects that are moving forward in the 2023 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Grant Round ranking process. In-person site visits were held in early March with members of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board's Technical Review Panel to review the technical aspect of each project.

2023 Project proposals can be reviewed at:

- [Middle Crescent Harbor Creek](#)
- [Scenic Heights Penn Cove Culvert No. 3345](#)
- [Humphrey Rd Deer Creek Culvert No. 281](#)
- [Deer Creek Mouth](#)

Preliminary project scores will be discussed at the April SRTCC meeting.

April's Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee (SRTCC) meeting will be held on **Monday, April 24th from 2:00-4:00PM** via Zoom. If you would like to join the meeting, contact Lead Entity Coordinator Clea Barenburg at c.barenburg@islandcountywa.gov.

Be sure to check out the [Island County Salmon Recovery Website](#) for upcoming meeting agendas and minutes.

Conservation Future Fund Community Advisory Board (CFF CAB)

On Monday, March 20th, acquisition property site visits occurred. **All three** acquisition property site visits for the application cycle took place on this day.

A CFF CAB meeting was held on **Friday, March 24th from 10:00-11:30AM** via Zoom. During this meeting, March 20th's site visits were discussed among the advisory board members.

A public CFF CAB meeting was held in **hybrid format** on **Thursday, April 6th from 3:00-5:00PM**. During this meeting, applicant organizations were asked to present their proposals before the CAB in Coupeville.

The CAB will submit a report that contains its applicant ranking recommendations to the Island County commissioners by the **end of April**.

Be sure to check the [Island County CFF website](#) for updates on the 2023 CFF application cycle. Upcoming meetings, agendas, and minutes are posted on the website.



Image: CFF CAB tours Fossek Forest by IC DNR

The Conservation Futures Fund Citizen Advisory Board has **vacancies**. Three representatives, two representatives for the **county at large** and one representative for **Commissioner District #2**, are needed for the Citizen Advisory Board of the [Conservation Futures Fund](#). This board evaluates proposals for land acquisition and conservation on a yearly basis. While the decisions for the 2023 funding round are being made by the board's current members, the board plans to meet in the summer and fall to discuss changes to the program and would welcome new board members to join in this discussion. For more information on how to become a board member for this advisory group, please contact Conservation Future Funds Coordinator at conservationfutures@islandcountywa.gov.

Resources and Interesting Reads

Funding Opportunities

RFI on Monitoring to Accelerate Recovery

The Puget Sound Partnership is pleased to announce a Request for Information for collaborative monitoring-related projects to support and accelerate the recovery of the Puget Sound ecosystem. Proposals should either involve developing and first-time reporting of Vital Sign Indicators or addressing questions to inform and assess progress toward desired outcomes and statutory goals for Puget Sound recovery. Approximately \$750,000 will be allocated for selected projects with budgets ranging from \$50,000 to \$120,000. Up to 10 projects will be supported for the period of July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2025. **Responses are due by 11:59 pm on April 14, 2023.** For more information on the RFI click [HERE](#).

Puget Sound Stormwater Strategic Initiative Lead Request For Proposal

Puget Sound Partnership's Stormwater SIL is requesting funding proposals. The Stormwater SIL has **up to \$1 million** per proposal to award and **up to \$5.5 million** available for the following two investment priorities: (1) Reducing Toxins in Fish through Chemical Action Plan Implementation and (2) Research on Contaminants of Emerging Concern. Review the [solicitation materials](#) for more information. **Eligible applicants** include Native American Tribes, state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, private academic institutions, and public universities and colleges. This Stormwater Strategic Initiative Lead Request for Proposals (RFP) is **currently accepting applications until May 1, 2023, by 11:59pm PST.** For more information on the Stormwater SIL RFP, click [HERE](#).

2023 Coastal Watersheds Grant

Restore America's Estuaries, in partnership with the U.S. EPA, is pleased to announce the 2023 funding round of the [National Estuary Program \(NEP\) Coastal Watersheds Grant](#). Approximately \$1 million in grants will be made available. The NEP Coastal Watersheds Grant Program is a nationally competitive grants program designed to support projects that address urgent and challenging issues threatening the well-being of coastal and estuarine areas within determined estuaries of national significance. RAE will select grantees through a **two-step process**: 1) letters of intent (LOI); and 2) full proposals by invitation only. Both steps are competitive and a request for full proposal does not guarantee funding. **LOIs are due on Friday, May 5, 2023.** The submission portal will be open in the coming days

Puget Sound Shellfish Strategic Initiative Lead Request For Proposal

Puget Sound Partnership's Shellfish SIL is requesting proposals for funding. The Shellfish SIL has **up to \$1 million** to award. Investment priorities include enabling municipalities and privately owned wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) to prepare for modifications that will lead to shellfish classification upgrades around outfalls, implement small-scale upgrades, consider future capacity needs, and/or to reduce frequency of emergency closures that impact shellfish bed harvest. **Eligible applicants** include Native American Tribes, state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, private academic institutions, and public universities and colleges. This Shellfish RFP Solicitation opens April 11, 2023, and will be open for 7 weeks. **Applications are due May 31, 2023, by 11:59pm PST.** To attend the application information webinar on April 18, 2023, from 10:00-11:30AM, click [HERE](#). For more information on the Shellfish SIL RFP, click [HERE](#).



Image: SRTCC 2023 by IC DNR

Learn

Island County Fish Passage Barrier Inventory: Priority Area 2

In December 2022, a final report that details Island County's fish passage barrier inventory in priority area 2 was released. The project was sponsored by Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Sound Salmon Solutions, and Island County Public Works and was funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board #19-1343. The report relates that "recent research has found that coastal streams in Island County provide quality rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids during critical rearing periods in spring. Lack of delta and pocket estuary rearing habitat is identified as a limiting factor or critical issue throughout the Puget Sound, especially in the Skagit, Stillaguamish and Island County watersheds." To learn more about the project and its results, click [HERE!](#)

World Water Day

On March 22nd, the United Nations observed [World Water Day](#) to raise awareness and inspire action to protect the earth's water resources. This year's theme was about accelerating change to solve the water and wastewater crises. Water affects us all, each day, in many ways we don't think about.

Everyone can do something to alleviate the stress on our drinking water systems. Many small acts combine to make a big change. You, your family, school, and community can make a difference by changing the way you think about and use water in your everyday lives. Here are some ideas to get started:

- **Save water.** Take shorter showers. Don't let the tap run while brushing your teeth, doing dishes, cleaning, or preparing food.
- **Be curious.** Find out where your water comes from and how it is shared with your community. Visit a treatment plant to see how your drinking water is treated, filtered, and distributed.
- **Protect nature.** Plant a tree or create a rain garden. Use natural solutions to reduce the risk of flooding.
- **Keep water in your pipes.** Fix leaky water pipes, toilets, and faucets. You could save hundreds of gallons a year by fixing leaks.
- **Flush safe.** Don't put food waste, oils, medicines and chemicals down your toilet or drains.
- **Clean up.** Take part in clean-ups of your local rivers, lakes, wetlands, or beaches.



Image: Freund Marsh Beach by IC DNR

Act!

Utilizing MyCoast to Help our Shoreline Stewards

Collecting data is critical to helping agencies and organizations steward our shoreline. MyCoast can be used as a website or a phone-based app. It empowers community members to help characterize beach change and the impact of nearshore hazards in order to enhance awareness among decision makers. You can help track things like beach change over time, large marine debris, king tides, abandoned vessels, creosote logs, and storm surges. To learn more or to download the app, click [here!](#)

Thank you for your interest in Island County Natural Resources.

For more information, contact Island County Natural Resources at

DNR@islandcountywa.gov.

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