



# Island County

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## March 2023 Natural Resources Newsletter

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# Natural Resources Newsletter

March 2023

## Announcements

### National Groundwater Awareness Week

Last week, the [National Groundwater Awareness Week](#) reminded us of the importance of groundwater to our communities. In fact, **over 44%** of the nation's population depends upon groundwater as a primary water source. Water well owners can view this week as an annual reminder to [test, tend, and treat](#) their private water systems!



*Image: National Groundwater Awareness Week Banner by National Groundwater Association (NGWA)*

According to the [National Groundwater Association](#), there are **ten** ways to help to protect and conserve groundwater:

1. **Go native:** Use native plants in your landscape. They look great, and don't need much water or fertilizer. Also choose grass varieties for your lawn that are adapted for your region's climate, reducing the need for extensive watering or chemical applications.
2. **Reduce chemical use:** Use fewer chemicals around your home and yard, and make sure to dispose of them properly — don't dump them on the ground!
3. **Manage waste:** Properly dispose of potentially toxic substances like unused chemicals, pharmaceuticals, paint, motor oil, and other substances. Many communities hold household hazardous waste collections or sites — contact your local health department to find one near you.
4. **Don't let it run:** Shut off the water when you brush your teeth or while shaving, and don't let it run while waiting for it to get cold. Keep a pitcher of cold water in the fridge instead.
5. **Fix the drip:** Check all the faucets, fixtures, toilets, and taps in your home for leaks and fix them right away, or install water conserving models.
6. **Wash smarter:** Limit yourself to just a five-minute shower, and challenge your family members to do the same! Also, make sure to only run full loads in the dish and clothes washers.

7. **Water wisely:** Water the lawn and plants during the coolest parts of the day and only when they truly need it. Make sure you, your family, and your neighbors obey any watering restrictions during dry periods.
8. **Reduce, reuse, and recycle:** Reduce the amount of "stuff" you use and reuse what you can. Recycle paper, plastic, cardboard, glass, aluminum and other materials.
9. **Natural alternatives:** Use all natural/nontoxic household cleaners whenever possible. Materials such as lemon juice, baking soda, and vinegar make great cleaning products, are inexpensive, and environmentally-friendly.
10. **Learn and do more!**: Get involved in water education! Learn more about groundwater and share your knowledge with others.

## New Report by the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office Says Salmon Still Struggling

The recent [State of Salmon in Watersheds report](#) relates that climate change and other challenges, including habitat loss, stormwater pollution, stream temperature, predation and barriers to migration, have left many salmon still struggling for survival. In fact, **ten out of fourteen** population groups of salmon and steelhead in Washington are either in crisis or falling further from recovery.

Governor Jay Inslee urges that "salmon need our help, now. Salmon are essential to our identity, ecosystems and economy. We can't wait to save them—we have to invest in their recovery right away by restoring habitats and doing everything possible to repel threats to their survival."

Click [here](#) to read more on Washington State's Recreation and Conservation Office website!



*Image photographed by John McMillan, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Northwest Fisheries Science Center, from Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office Website*

## Conservation Futures Fund Citizen Advisory Board 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 over the next two months 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 Michala Milewski, Conservation Future Funds Coordinator at [M.Milewski@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:M.Milewski@islandcountywa.gov).

## Programmatic Updates

### [Island Local Integrating Organization \(ILIO\)](#)

The next ILIO Technical Committee meetings will be held on **Tuesday, March 14th from 1:00-3:00PM** and **Tuesday, April 11th 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](mailto: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, April 4th 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](mailto:k.zupich@islandcountywa.gov).

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

### [Salmon Recovery](#)

The public is welcome to attend the **March 15<sup>th</sup> SRTCC meeting from 2:00-4:00PM** via Zoom. There will be presentations on the salmon recovery projects submitted for the 2023 SFRB Grant Round. Click [here](#) to learn more about SFRB Grant Funding!

For more information on the specific projects that will be discussed, click on the following project titles:

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

If you would like to join the meeting, contact Lead Entity Coordinator Clea Barenburg at [c.barenburg@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:c.barenburg@islandcountywa.gov).

Next month's Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee (SRTCC) meeting will be held on **Wednesday, 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](mailto: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 will occur. **All three** acquisition property site visits for the application cycle will take place on this day. If you would like to learn more about 2023's CFF Site Visit Day, please contact the CFF Coordinator Michala Milewski at [m.milewski@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:m.milewski@islandcountywa.gov).

The next CFF CAB meeting will be held on **Friday, March 24th from 10:00-11:30AM** via Zoom. During this meeting, March 20th's site visits will be discussed among the advisory board members. If you would like to join the meeting, contact the CFF Coordinator Michala Milewski at [m.milewski@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:m.milewski@islandcountywa.gov).

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

proposals before the CAB in Coupeville. If you would like to join the meeting, please contact the CFF Coordinator Michala Milewski at [m.milewski@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:m.milewski@islandcountywa.gov).

Be sure to check the [Island County CFF website](#) for upcoming meetings, agendas, and minutes.

## Resources and Interesting Reads

### Whidbey Weekly Article Column: Make a Difference by Ann Prusha

*Those who live on Whidbey Island have a strong connection to the sea. We catch glimpses of it on our drives to work. We hunt for agates among the gravel and watch our children run barefoot into the waves. We walk dogs, birdwatch, harvest shellfish, and take photos of the amazing creatures that live in tidepools. We smell the salty air as we go about our lives. We make important life decisions while the waves ebb and flow and enjoy time with our families while seagulls drop clams from high above. The shoreline is part of our DNA. Our proximity to the sea allows us to understand the power of water and wind. We recently experienced record-breaking high tides and subsequent flooding. Many homes were affected, roads flooded, and we saw first-hand the effects of rising seas....click [HERE](#) to continue reading!*

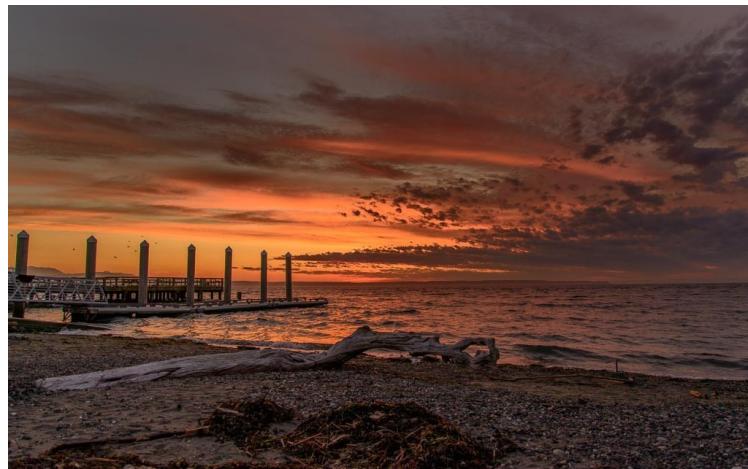


Image: Bush Point by IC DNR

### Funding Opportunities

#### Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Grant Funding

The Bureau of Reclamation is making approximately \$80 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law available for water conservation, water management and restoration projects that will result in significant benefits to ecosystem or watershed health under their WaterSMART program. States, Tribes, conservation organizations, and others are eligible to apply. **Applications are due by March 28, 2023, at 4:00PM MDT.** Watch a recorded info session on applicant and project type eligibility, program requirements, and the evaluation criteria for the Environmental Water Resources Projects funding opportunity and the upcoming Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Program by clicking [HERE](#), or for more information about the WaterSMART program, click [HERE](#).

#### 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.** There is an info session on February 23, 2023 from 1-2 pm, to register click [HERE](#). 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**. To attend the application information session on March 29, 2023 from 1:00-2:00PM, click [HERE](#). For more information on the Stormwater SIL RFP, click [HERE](#).

#### **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](#).

## **Learn**

#### **Crab Pot Escapement Study: Newly Published Manuscript**

The [Northwest Straits Foundation](#) reports that "it completed a study in 2015 to understand why lost crab pots with broken escape cord continue to capture and kill Dungeness crab rather than allowing them to escape as designed. The Crab Pot Escapement Study determined whether different crab pot designs were effective at allowing crab to escape once escape cord had deteriorated and broken, releasing an escapement path which should allow crab to escape. Many of the commonly used pot designs allowed only 5 – 10% of crab to escape. The good news is this study identified a simple modification which can be made to recreational crabs allowing all crab to escape from lost pots once the rot cord has broken. The results from this study are now available in a published manuscript which is available for **free download** until March 23rd." Click [HERE](#) to view and download the manuscript!

#### **Salmon Recovery Conference**

This year's Salmon Recovery Conference will be held on **April 18-19, 2023** at the convention center in **Vancouver, WA**. Registration has opened. The theme of this year's conference is A Shared Future, which reflects the desire to hear broad community perspectives with regards to salmon recovery. View a complete list of registration types and prices at [Salmon Recovery Conference - Recreation and Conservation Office \(wa.gov\)](#).

## **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!](#)

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Thank you for your interest in Island County Natural Resources.

For more information, contact Michala Milewski:

m.milewski@islandcountywa.gov or 360-240-5510.

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