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Natural Resources Newsletter

December 2024

Announcements



Salmon Recovery Request for Proposals

Salmon Recovery Request for Proposals for funding in 2025! Please see the Island County Salmon Recovery Funding Board section of the website for more information on the 2025 grant round supported by your local Lead Entity. Lead Entities are local, watershed-based organizations in Washington that solicit, develop, prioritize, and submit habitat protection and restoration projects for funding to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB).

For more information about the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, [click here](#).

State of the Salmon in Watersheds - [Statewide Habitat Data](#)

Puget Sound Regional Recovery - [Recovery Plan Progress in Puget Sound](#)



Island County Conservation Futures Fund Program

The Island County Conservation Futures Fund Program 2025 funding cycle begins January 15th, 2025 for both acquisition and M&O. The CFP will have a new application format and funding budget.

For more information, [please click this link](#).

Orca Recovery Day Event

The Marine Resources Committee in partnership with the Northwest Straits Foundation hosted an Orca Recovery Day event planting. We added over 250 native plants to our restoration sites at Cornet Bay and Hoypus Point. Healthy shorelines provide habitat for the species that salmon and orcas rely on to survive and thrive.

For more information about future events, [click through to the Island County Marine Resources Committee website](#).



L Pod Orcas Spotted

It has recently been reported that endangered Southern Resident killer whales have been spending more time around our shores.

Researchers believe they are doing this because of an unusually large run of chum salmon heading to the nearby rivers to spawn. Our local Southern Resident Orca whales are adapted to fish-eating, and as their favored food of Chinook salmon becomes less available, they are learning to feed on fall Chum.

Spring and summer Chinook runs have continued to decline in northern Puget Sound despite recent recovery efforts. There are some parts of Puget Sound that the Southern Resident population has not been seen around for decades.

Surprisingly early in November they made a visit to the infamous orca-capture grounds in Penn Cove, for what is probably the first time in more than 50 years. To learn more about Chinook Salmon Recovery in Island County, [click here to visit our website](#).

To learn more about this particular spotting in Penn Cove, read this article from the [Puget Sound Institute](#).

Programmatic Updates

Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen's Committee (SRTCC)

The Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen's Committee meets on the third Wednesday of each month. The work focus is within the Water Resources Inventory Area (WRIA) 6. Please contact our lead entity Clea Barenburg if you are interested in joining this committee.

This month's meeting will occur on December 18th, 2024.

The SRTCC prioritizes and supports salmon recovery projects, provides technical assistance, revises the Salmon Recovery Plan, and ensures projects align with community goals. They act as a hub for salmon-related efforts, secure funding, promote scientific research, and educate the public on ecosystem processes vital to salmon recovery.

Use [this link for more information](#).

Learn + Act



Shore Friendly Living - Restoring the Connection Between Land and Water

This video is the third in a series made by the Northwest Straits Foundation in partnership with other Shore Friendly programs across Puget Sound.

The Shore Friendly program was created to provide shoreline landowners with resources to maintain and protect their investments while also protecting the fish and wildlife that need healthy nearshore habitats to thrive.

Although we may view the upland portion of the beach as separate from the marine waters, the trees, shrubs, insects, and birds of the upland are actually intrinsically connected to the marine waters and the animals that live there.

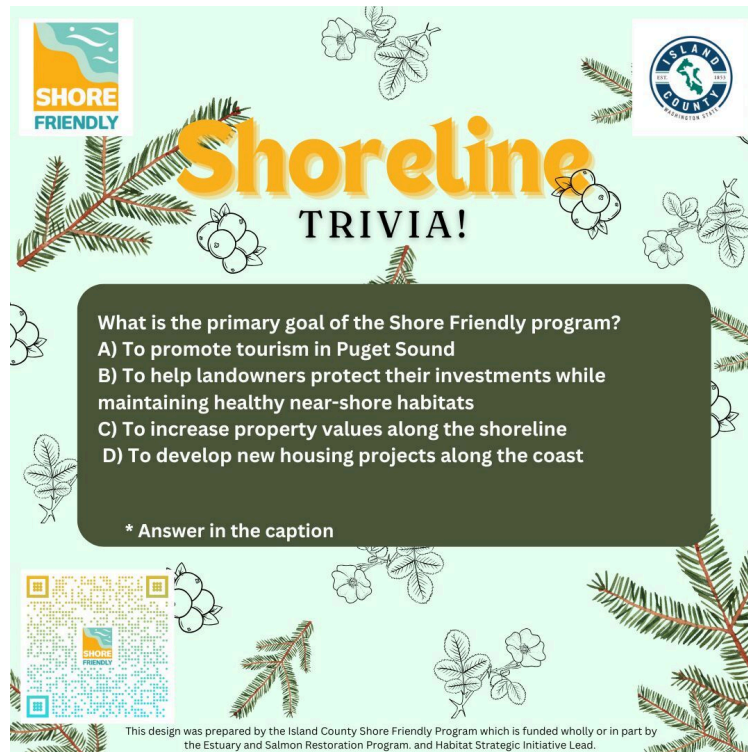
This video takes a look at the bigger picture of the marine ecosystem by showing the connection between all of the species that use the shoreline, and how bulkheads, or other forms of shoreline armoring, disrupt that ecological balance.

[Click this link to watch the video](#).

Resources and more information:

- [Shore Friendly Program | Island County, WA](#)
- <https://nwstraitsfoundation.org/>

Shoreline Trivia



The Answer is B! The primary goal of the Shore Friendly program is to help landowners protect their investments while maintaining healthy near-shore habitats.

Shore Friendly Plant of the Month

Did you know the Coastal Strawberry is more than just a beautiful plant? Native to our region, this hardy ground cover plays a crucial role in Island County's ecosystem:

- Prevents erosion by stabilizing sandy soils along our coasts.
- Supports pollinators with its delicate flowers, providing nectar for bees and other insects.
- Nourishes wildlife with its small, sweet fruits loved by birds and small mammals.

Plus, it's an important piece of our natural heritage and a symbol of resilience in harsh coastal conditions. Let's celebrate this local gem and protect the ecosystems it thrives in!

Do you have questions about your shoreline property? [Request a visit.](#)



PLANT OF THE MONTH!

DISCOVER THE COASTAL STRAWBERRY (FRAGARIA CHILOENSIS)

DESCRIPTION

Height: 6 to 12 inches
Leaves: Tri-foliate, nearly round, leathery, toothed edges, glabrous above, hairy underneath, 2 to 20 cm petiole.
Flowers: White, 5 petals, up to 1 inch across, numerous pistils, 20-35 stamens.
Fruit: Small, red, fleshy strawberries, 1 inch across, covered with achenes.



USES

Ornamental: Attractive groundcover with white flowers and red fruit; spreads aggressively.
Ethnobotanical: Eaten raw by Native tribes; leaves used medicinally for burns.
Wildlife: Food source for multiple species



This design was prepared by the Island County Shore Friendly Program which is funded wholly or in part by the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program and Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead.




Thank you for your interest in Island County Natural Resources.

For more information, contact Jen Schmitz: J.Schmitz@islandcountywa.gov or 360-914-0841.

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