

The biodiversity and landscapes of Puget Sound are part of America's natural heritage.



A Salish Sea orca breaches the surface near the San Juan Islands in Puget Sound.

Rough Waters Ahead

The Impact of the Trump Administration's EPA Budget Cuts on Puget Sound

Millions of Americans live in the Puget Sound watershed, and millions more come each year to fish, boat and enjoy its water and wildlife. But intense human activity has polluted the Sound. The Environmental Protection Agency has been vital to protecting Puget Sound, holding polluters accountable and working with state, local and tribal governments to clean up and restore the Sound. That work is in jeopardy because the Trump administration has proposed cutting the EPA's budget by 31 percent.

Clean Water in Puget Sound Requires a Strong EPA

Puget Sound is being protected with funding and effort from the EPA. For example, the EPA has worked to:

- **Conduct research and educate the public:** There are fewer than 80 endangered orcas left in Puget Sound and the Salish Sea, in part due to increasing pollution from synthetic chemicals like toxic flame retardants and plasticizers. The EPA has funded research by the University of Washington's Center for Conservation Biology to better understand how synthetic pollutants affect orcas and their main food source, salmon.
- **Hold polluters accountable:** Shellfish harvested from areas polluted with fecal bacteria like *E. coli* can make people sick, and thousands of acres of shellfish beds must be closed every year in Puget Sound to protect public health. In 2015, the EPA fined a dairy in Lynden for discharging water loaded with raw manure without a permit and polluting shellfish beds. The farm had to improve its manure management practices.

- **Remove obstacles to salmon migration:** The EPA funded the 2014 removal of a culvert on Chico Creek near Dyes Inlet in Kitsap County, and has supported dozens of similar projects across the Sound to restore salmon access to spawning streams. Washington state must remove or replace nearly 1,000 more culverts, at a projected cost of more than \$300 million per year until 2030. Adequate EPA funding is essential for the federal government and the state of Washington to fulfill treaty promises of sufficient salmon for tribes to fish.
- **Keep pollution out of our waterways:** Stormwater runoff is the largest single source of toxic chemicals, like flame retardants and pesticides, in Puget Sound. Military training, chemical storage and other activities at Joint Base Lewis-McChord all pollute runoff from the facility. The EPA, which has sole authority over federal facilities in Washington, established an innovative stormwater discharge permit in 2013 for Joint Base Lewis-McChord to limit runoff pollution from the facility.

More Restoration Work Needed

Puget Sound’s beauty hides some of the challenges it faces. EPA, state and tribal efforts to protect and restore Puget Sound have not been enough to stem the flow of pollution from human activity in the watershed. Fish consumption advisories, shellfish bed closures, declining orca populations and 17 ongoing Superfund cleanups show that we still have work to do in cleaning up the Sound.



Red-orange algal bloom in Puget Sound near Edmonds, WA, in May 2013. Some shellfish beds in the Sound were closed in 2015 to protect people from exposure to a harmful algal bloom.



Stormwater runoff from pavement and rooftops degrades water quality in Puget Sound.

The Trump Administration’s Proposed Budget Cuts Would Reduce State Grants for Clean Water

Program (most recent year of funding for which data are available)	Funding in most recent year	Estimated lost funding due to proposed Trump admin. cuts
Water Pollution Control Grants (FY16)	\$5,631,000	\$1,689,300
Nonpoint Pollution Control Grants (FY15)	\$5,970,458	\$5,970,458
Drinking Water Protection and Enforcement Grants (FY17)	\$2,731,000	\$819,300
TOTAL	\$14,332,458	\$8,479,058

Full Funding for the EPA

To build on the progress of recent decades, funding for the EPA and the state and local efforts it supports should be increased, not cut. The agency needs money to continue its critical role in supporting cleanup of past pollution and restoring damaged rivers and streams so that they can provide clean water. Ensuring that people who live in the Puget Sound region have continued access to clean water requires full funding for the EPA.

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