



Ocean Acidification: Local action in the Northwest Straits

NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

Ocean acidification is a change in seawater chemistry due to the absorption of carbon dioxide. It is a local and global problem; a consequence of man-made carbon emissions. In Puget Sound, shellfish and other living creatures are being impacted, posing a serious threat to jobs in the Washington state seafood industry.

The Northwest Straits Initiative is working to mitigate ocean acidification and its impacts on local businesses and economies. Volunteers with seven county-based Marine Resources Committees (MRC) and the Northwest Straits Commission are demonstrating ways to engage in local solutions, and sharing information that is provided by leading science and policy experts.

On November 27, 2012, the Washington State Blue Ribbon Panel released its report on ocean acidification¹, calling for action that includes public outreach, managing land-based contributions to ocean acidification, and preserving native eelgrass and kelp populations.

What are we doing right now?

- **Sharing new and relevant information** to help people identify local solutions
- **Reducing nitrate pollution in runoff**, which exacerbates acidification
- **Protecting eelgrass**, a natural buffer against rising acidity of seawater
- **Restoring native oysters**, to enhance naturally-occurring populations and boost natural reproduction

¹<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/1201015.html>

EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

The Northwest Straits Commission hosts free public seminars to bring research and policy experts together with community members and decision-makers. The next event will be in January 2013. Presentations and useful links are on our website under [Ocean Acidification](#).

PHYTOREMEDIATION



On Ebey's Prairie, the Island County MRC has installed a bioswale which percolates runoff through roots and soil. The goal is to reduce nutrient pollution and remove toxic contaminants from stormwater before it reaches Penn Cove.

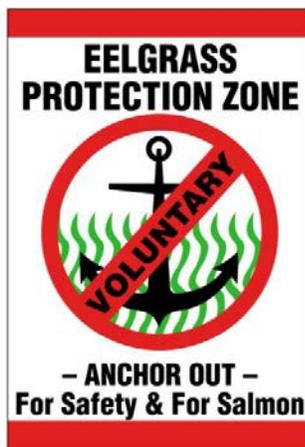
RAIN GARDENS



The Skagit MRC worked with the Port of Anacortes to install a rain garden to treat roof runoff and provide a model for people to learn about this technique.

On a popular street corner two blocks from the ferry in Friday Harbor, the San Juan MRC put in a rain garden to filter and divert polluted stormwater runoff.

EELGRASS PROTECTION



Along the busy waterfront of Port Townsend, the Jefferson MRC created an 'Anchor Out for Eelgrass' zone, successfully preventing recreational boaters from damaging this critical, shallow water habitat. Boating effort is not affected, and the MRC has achieved a 99% voluntary compliance rate.

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OLYMPIA OYSTER RESTORATION



The Northwest Straits Commission and the Clallam, Jefferson, Skagit and Whatcom MRCs are all involved with Olympia oyster restoration. In Skagit County, out-planted oysters are now reproducing and population size is increasing.

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