



WATER STEWARDSHIP 2021

BY THE NUMBERS

- Trained 123 new volunteers across Kitsap - 43 Beach Naturalists, 25 Stream Stewards, and 55 Salmon Docents.
- Over 1556 contacts were made at Kitsap Salmon Tours at 8 sites across Kitsap County.
- Trained volunteers committed 1525 hours to improving local ecosystems through education, stewardship and community science.
- Water Stewardship volunteers participated in 6 enrichment events totaling over 15 hours of continuing education in 2021.



ISSUE

With approximately 250 miles of marine shoreline, over 10,000 acres of public lands managed by Kitsap County Parks, and hundreds of streams that feed into Puget Sound and Hood Canal, Kitsap County supports a wide array of diverse ecosystems. Kitsap is also home to a steadily increasing population, and in 2019, population density reached the third highest density of any county in Washington state, estimated at 635 people per square mile. The land and water resources that make Kitsap such a beautiful place to live are threatened by this growth and urban development. The Puget Sound Institute estimates that 52,000-66,000 pounds of pollutants are released into Puget Sound each day, and this cost of stormwater pollution is expected to exceed \$1 billion over the next ten years. Pollution and habitat loss threaten some of the Pacific Northwest's most iconic species including the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale and Pacific salmon populations. The road to ecosystem recovery is long, and education and citizen engagement are essential components of the strategy to protect, preserve, and recover our region for future generations.

RESPONSE

The WSU Extension Water Stewardship Program provides Kitsap residents with educational training programs, volunteer opportunities, and educational events to help turn environmental knowledge into action.

WSU Kitsap Extension employs a three-pronged approach to tackling water and natural resource issues:

1. We teach people to value and protect our natural resources through public events and three in-depth training programs led by staff and local experts.
2. We train people to be volunteer educators, to share knowledge and inspire a stewardship ethic in others.
3. Through partnership with local agencies and governments, we connect people with local restoration, enhancement, and monitoring projects.



QUOTES

“ Stream Stewards helped connect me to all sorts of volunteer opportunities to be actively involved in enhancing and improving Kitsap ecosystems and natural resource protection. The course was inspiring and motivational too.”

“ I'm not sure I can put how valuable this training is into words - except to say that I wish this material was mandatory for all students; that somehow this information was taught in every school to every student every year from kindergarten through high school, and that volunteering was required as well. Imagine what our world would be like if kids grew up with more understanding of how our actions affect the health of the earth and wildlife around them.”

“ Understanding and teaching others about beach animals, conservation, pollution, etc. is an invaluable tool.”

“ This program is a valuable learning program taught by a most passionate and enthusiastic panel of speakers from various backgrounds. It has been wonderful to learn more about the Salish Sea and its inhabitants from such knowledgeable speakers, who in turn empower me to share my new found knowledge with visitors and other locals.”

RESPONSE

In 2021, the Water Stewardship Program trained 123 new volunteers across the Stream Steward, Salmon Docent, and Beach Naturalist training programs. Collectively, trainees engaged in 61 hours of instruction. Post-training evaluations indicated that the vast majority of trainees across the three programs (97%) plan to share what they learned in the training with others and to apply what they learned in their personal lives.

Presentation topics varied based on training focus, and in 2021, examples of these included:

- Stream Stewards- Low impact development, stream invertebrates, watershed geology and hydrology
- Salmon Docents- Salmon life cycle and physiology, stormwater and climate change impacts
- Beach Naturalists- Salish Sea oceanography, intertidal invertebrates, invasive green crab research and community science

From volunteering to protect water quality to preserving Kitsap salmon habitat, trainees recognized a clear path from their training experience to taking action. Alumni of the educational trainings contributed more than 1525 hours of service to improve Kitsap ecosystems through education, stewardship and community science.

In 2021, a few examples of how alumni volunteered to make a difference include:

- Educated the public: shared salmon information with visitors at Kitsap Salmon Tours; participated in the salmon in the classroom virtual field trips; sharing ecological information with the public during Orca Recovery Day
- Stewardship: Removed invasive scotch broom from Newberry Hill Heritage Park; planted native plants at Chico Salmon Park; Improved shoreline habitat through area clean-ups.
- Community science: Analyzed plankton samples in search of toxic algal bloom species

PARTNERS

City of Bremerton, Chico Salmon Park Stewardship Group, Clean Water Kitsap, Clear Creek Task Force, Kitsap County Parks, Great Peninsula Conservancy, Harbor WildWatch, Keta Legacy Foundation, Kitsap County, Kitsap Conservation District, Kitsap Public Health District, Kitsap PUD, Kitsap Regional Library, Olympic College, City of Poulsbo, The Kitsap Sun, Washington Sea Grant, and more.



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