

RESTORING THE GREEN-DUWAMISH WATERSHED

Conservation that Unites Urban and Rural Landscapes

THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

ABOUT THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

The Green-Duwamish Watershed is one of eleven newly selected locations for the nation's Urban Waters Federal Partnership. This partnership will reconnect urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with community-led revitalization efforts to improve our nation's water systems and promote their economic, environmental and social benefits. Specifically, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership will:

- Break down federal program silos to promote more efficient and effective use of federal resources through better coordination and targeting of federal investments.
- Recognize and build on local efforts and leadership, by engaging and serving community partners.
- Work with tribes, local officials and effective community-based organizations to leverage area resources and stimulate local economies to create local jobs.
- Learn from early and visible victories to fuel long-term action.

Led by these federal agencies and coordinated by the White House Domestic Policy Council and White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership closely aligns with and advances the work of the White House's place-based efforts, including the **Partnership for Sustainable Communities**, to revitalize communities, create jobs and improve the quality of life in cities and towns across the nation. The Urban Waters Federal Partnership also advances the work of the **America's Great Outdoors** Initiative (<http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov/>).

For more information, visit www.urbanwaters.gov

ABOUT THE GREEN-DUWAMISH WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

Many groups, including American Indian tribes, numerous government agencies, stewardship groups, and other organizations are already actively pursuing restoration in this watershed. The goal of the Green-Duwamish Watershed Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) is to enhance their effectiveness. In its first few months, the partnership has already achieved a new level of coordination between the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, NOAA, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the USDA Forest Service. But there is more to be done.

The federal partners are therefore working closely with established entities in the region, such as the Puget Sound Federal Caucus and the Watershed Ecosystem Forum of Watershed Resource Inventory Area 9 (WRIA 9), to build on their groundwork. The partnership operates through a place-based, locally-driven approach that meets the needs of people in the community. To achieve this, the Green-Duwamish Urban Waters Federal Partnership engages American Indian tribes, local businesses, environmental justice advocacy groups, and private landowners to identify proposed conservation projects that answer social equity and community revitalization needs.

To discuss partnership parameters and begin identifying roles and objectives, an initial core working group meeting was held in Seattle (September 25-26, 2012), attended by 7 federal agencies and 6 state and local entities. The group discussed local concerns and ongoing activities, and introduced their UWFP "Ambassador," who will be the primary interface between federal agency contacts and local stakeholders.



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY AND THE GREEN-DUWAMISH RIVER WATERSHED

The Green-Duwamish River Watershed is home to some of the most economically and ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the nation. Sparsely populated rural areas, urban fringe, and industrial areas are all included in this watershed. Tribes have used this watershed for centuries for traditional, cultural and subsistence uses. The City of Tacoma relies on it for its municipal water source, and it supports regional economic growth. In addition, it provides habitat for five species of salmon, several of which are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

In an effort to improve water quality, enhance public access and benefits, and restore the watershed's ecosystem, here are some federal and local projects the Partnership is currently engaged in:

Environmental justice – The Green-Duwamish UWFP has established ties with the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, a non-profit community advisory group dedicated to the restoration of the Duwamish River so that its benefits are accessible to all. Residents of Lower Duwamish River communities in particular are considered by federal, tribal, state, and local agencies to carry an uneven burden of persistent pollution. Through its focus on the public values of healthy urban waters, the UWFP is helping assess how natural resource planning can help restore the watersheds that sustain and enhance quality of life, particularly in environmental justice communities.

Salmon recovery – The Green-Duwamish UWFP positioned its geographic boundaries to include all of Watershed Resource Inventory Area 9 (WRIA 9), which is part of a major interagency collaboration to implement a watershed-based habitat recovery plan for salmon. These projects are restoring physical, chemical, and biological processes; habitat connectivity; and clean water in quantities conducive to salmon recovery. The Green-Duwamish UWFP helps leverage these efforts by revealing common ground among existing conservation and restoration plans.

Citizen-based stewardship – Researchers from the Forest Service PNW Station are mapping the positive environmental effects of citizen-based stewardship work, and evaluating the contribution stewardship makes to grassroots community-building and social benefits such as neighborliness, exercise, and public health. This approach demonstrates avenues for creating green jobs through conservation activities or citizen science projects.

WHAT'S NEXT

Stewardship footprint – We will study ways to synthesize the impacts of ongoing stewardship activities. This will enable us to develop a framework that will help establish and meet long-term watershed restoration goals and clean water goals of the Green-Duwamish Watershed, as well as water quality goals of the broader Puget Sound ecosystem. We will also study the costs and benefits of tribal, local, and regional stewardship activities to provide insights into the range of values of ecosystem services provided by urban waters in the region.

Interconnections: ecosystem health and economic prosperity – We will work with our partners on a targeted ecosystem services evaluation study of the watershed that includes both economic and social indicators. Results will provide an articulation of the dependency of natural systems on community stewardship. It will also provide a basis for comparing the merits of different restoration approaches.

Duwamish Health Impact Assessment – The Green-Duwamish UWFP will build on the learning generated by this effort, which assesses key health issues affecting people who use the Duwamish Waterway or live nearby.



THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

The partnership includes: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of the Army (Army Corps of Engineers), U.S. Department of Commerce (Economic Development Administration and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), Corporation for National and Community Service, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Transportation.

For more information on the Green Duwamish River Watershed Urban Waters Federal Partnership, please contact the lead agency representative or Ambassador:

Dale Blahna
U.S. Forest Service/USDA
206-732-7833
dblahna@fs.fed.us

Tracy Stanton
Ambassador/Coordinator
301-520-0668
tstanton@me.com