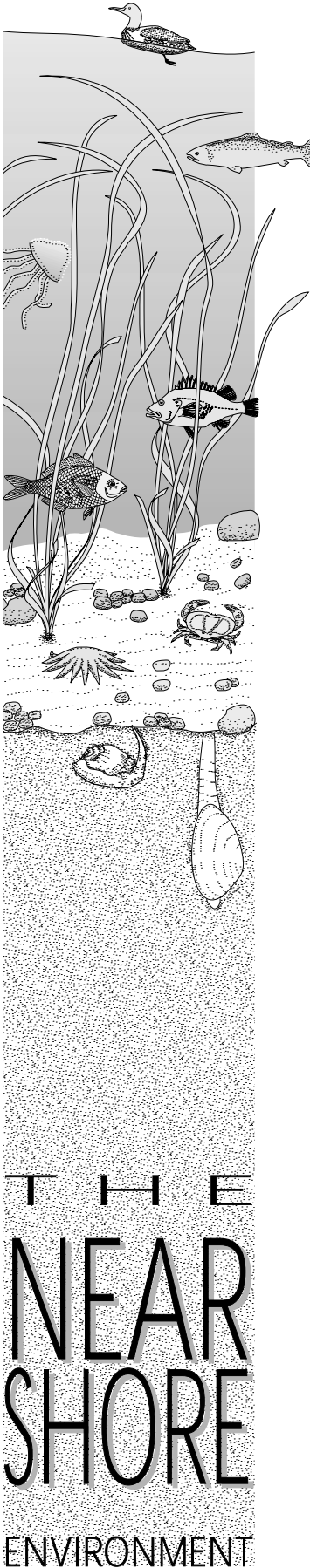


BEYOND THE BEACH



Stand on any beach or shoreline and look out toward the water. Nearly everything you could throw a rock at is called the nearshore—an important part of the watersheds of Puget Sound. The nearshore environment includes rich wetlands, estuaries and beaches, kelp forests and sea grass meadows. From the upland shore to as deep in the water as sunlight can reach, this system is directly influenced by tides, wave action, runoff, and land use practices from the rest of the watershed.

CRAWLING WITH LIFE

The nearshore is incredibly lush—and vital to the survival of all of Puget Sound's marine life. Organic matter is produced, trapped, retained and decomposed and provides a rich foundation for the food web. Clams, crabs and small fish like surf smelt and Pacific herring rely on this organic chowder. In turn they support populations of larger fish, marine mammals and other species in the food chain.

THE THREATENED SALMON NEEDS THE NEARSHORE

Nearshore habitat is a critical leg in the salmon's journey to and from the Pacific Ocean. Here juvenile salmon prey on smaller fish and hide from larger fish. Here they grow and change from freshwater to saltwater creatures able to live in the ocean and survive its larger predators. And here they return on their journey home to spawn.

ARMORING THE SHORELINE STARVES THE BEACH

The 2,000 miles of our Puget Sound shoreline have been heavily developed. Bulkheads and other shoreline armoring interrupt natural erosion that feeds sand and gravel to the beach. The displaced energy can scour mud or sand beaches down to cobble or hardpan, which may be less able to support diverse plant and animal communities.

THE DOMINO EFFECT

Development across our watersheds has increased stormwater runoff. As natural surfaces in Puget Sound watersheds have been covered with roads, homes and parking lots, populations of salmon, herring, bottomfish and many other fish have decreased, water quality has declined, shellfish beds have closed, and contaminated sediments are washed into the nearshore environment.

A TURNING POINT

A lot of attention has been focused on how to save the salmon. Through these efforts, local agencies and organizations are beginning to understand the importance of Puget Sound's nearshore. Here are some places you can get more information or get involved in protecting the nearshore environment:

Volunteer to monitor or care for your beach:

Adopt a Beach 206-632-1390

People for Puget Sound 206-382-7007

Learn how to be a good shoreline neighbor:

Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team's Puget Sound Shoreline Stewardship Guidebook 1-800-54 SOUND

Learn about the creatures that make their home on the beach through the Beach Naturalist Program this summer 206-386-4353

Call Katy Vanderpool, Central Puget Sound Watershed Steward
@ 206-296-8363 for more information about efforts to protect the nearshore of King County

