

Puget Sound Nutrient Forum End of Year Update

December 2020



As the end of 2020 approaches, we want to thank you all for engaging with the Nutrient Forum and Puget Sound Nutrient Source Reduction Project this year. Covid-19 has changed so much of the way we work and we appreciate everyone's flexibility, creativity, and hard work throughout the year. We want to share the progress made this year, as well as give an update on what to expect in 2021.

Nutrient Forum meetings

We value everyone's participation at our Nutrient Forums this year.

- In January, we met to [announce Ecology's decision to develop a Nutrients General Permit](#) and gathered the Forum's feedback on how to convene an advisory committee.
- In May, we [presented our outline](#) for the Nutrient Reduction Plan and asked for feedback from the Forum. Thanks to many of you who submitted [your feedback](#) letters on the plan.
- In August, we [gave an update](#) on various elements of the Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Project.
- In November, we heard from the Nutrient General Permit Advisory Committee on their [permit recommendations](#), as well as from guest speakers on Emerging Nutrient Technologies for wastewater treatment plants (WWTP).

All Forum materials are posted on the [Nutrient Forum webpage](#).

Salish Sea Modeling

Our Salish Sea Modeling team continues working hard to finish the Year 1 modeling scenarios developed with the Forum in Spring 2019 (see [July meeting materials](#) for Forum feedback and final scenarios). Unexpected issues have resulted in delays to the schedule for completing the technical memo with these latest results. Consequently, we will publish the Year 1 technical memo in early 2021 and will hold a Forum to help explain and discuss the results. After that, will be another Forum to get your feedback on scenarios to evaluate in our Year 2 Salish Sea modeling efforts. Year 2 scenarios will include combinations of marine WWTP and watershed nutrient reductions to evaluate possible options for final nutrient load and wasteload allocations that will achieve marine dissolved oxygen standards.

Ecology recently posted a complete set of files related to the use of the Salish Sea Model for the 2019 Bounding Scenarios report. These files are publicly available on our [Salish Sea Model bounding scenarios report data webpage](#).

Nutrients General Permit

At the January Forum earlier this year, we announced our decision to move forward with a [Nutrients General Permit](#). In March, we convened the Nutrient General Permit Advisory Committee. This committee represents the interests of utilities, federal agencies, state agencies and environmental groups with Tribal participation occurring via communication with the Governor's office. Committee members met over seven months and developed a [General Permit Recommendations document](#). Thank you to all the Advisory Committee (AC) members and the many people who attended the AC meetings. Preliminary draft documents building on the AC's conceptual recommendations will be released for informal public comment in late January 2021, followed by a virtual information session in February. A formal permit draft will follow in spring 2021. If you have questions about the permit, please email PSNutrientsGP@ecy.wa.gov.

Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Plan

This fall, we began writing early draft sections of the Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Plan (NRP) to inform discussions about some of the common questions we hear from you now. Next year, we will hold Forums to get input on these early draft sections of the plan. Early drafts will be updated with feedback from the Forum and integrated into the public review draft of the NRP.

The NRP is a comprehensive plan for reducing human nutrient source loads to Puget Sound with the goal of meeting the marine water quality standards for dissolved oxygen in Puget Sound. Our plan is to release a draft NRP for public comment after completion of the Salish Sea modeling Volume 2 report, hopefully by the end of 2022.

2021 Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Grant Program

The 2021 Governor's Budget was recently announced and it included our request for a \$9 million Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Grant Program. This grant program will provide funding for pass-through grants to Puget Sound municipalities for wastewater nutrient reduction planning and optimization projects. This funding will support local governments in implementing the new nutrient general permit requirements.

Looking ahead to 2021

In 2021, we plan to convene the Forum virtually to cover an array of topics that will either inform our Salish Sea modeling efforts or content for the Nutrient Reduction Plan. The Forum topics we plan to cover, include (in sequence):

- Ecology's regulatory approach and application of the Salish Sea Model
- New Salish Sea Model results from the Year 1 scenarios
- Salish Sea Model Year 2 scenario planning
- Near-term and long-term watershed nutrient reduction strategies, including modeling

We are exploring ways to make the 2021 Forums more interactive since we expect to continue virtual Forums until Covid-related restrictions on large gatherings are lifted. Please reach out to Kelly Ferron (Kelly.ferron@ecy.wa.gov) if you have other ideas for Nutrient Forum topics or ways we can assist in bringing you all together to discuss important parts of this project.