



STORMWATER WORK GROUP

2024-2025 WORK PLAN

PURPOSE

This document provides context and direction for the Stormwater Work Group (SWG) in its roles in overseeing the [Stormwater Action Monitoring \(SAM\) program](#) and engaging in stormwater-related ecosystem recovery discussions and planning efforts.

The work plan lays out overarching areas of focus and specific tasks that need to be completed, including the expected timelines and the roles and responsibilities of various parties. The work plan also calls out specific areas where our work addresses broader strategic Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP) priorities. This 2-year work plan will be effective from **January 2024 – December 2025**.

BACKGROUND

The Stormwater Work Group is a coalition of representatives of local, state, and federal governments, environmental and business organizations, public ports, agriculture, and Tribal Nations. SWG formed in 2008 to develop a strategic, coordinated and integrated approach to understanding the stormwater problem in the Puget Sound. The SWG was the first work group to be formally included in the [Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program \(PSEMP\)](#). Since 2008, SWG membership has expanded to include southwestern Washington.

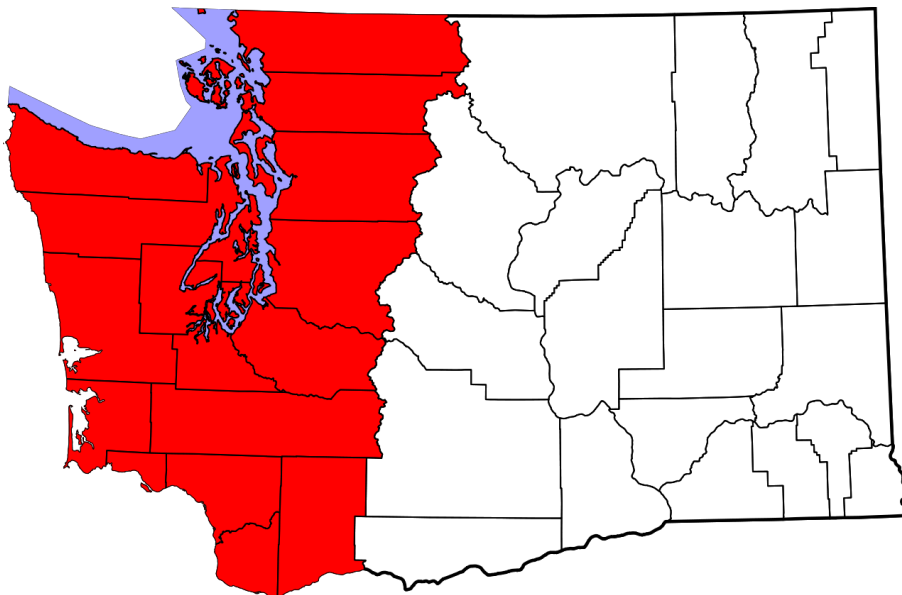


Image above: Map of counties in Western Washington represented by the SWG. This includes counties that are not located around the Puget Sound (Wikipedia, 2023).



In 2010, the SWG recommended a strategic scientific framework, priorities, and specific steps to implement through the [2010 Strategy](#). This is a framework for evaluating if our management actions are successfully reducing harm caused to the Puget Sound by stormwater from developed and developing lands. In 2012, the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) issued municipal stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits requiring the collective implementation of SAM, which was a prioritized subset of the 2010 Strategy. SAM launched in 2014 and expanded effectiveness studies to all permittees throughout Western Washington. By mid-2023, SAM has successfully contracted for more than 30 studies, and maintains three long-term receiving water trend studies. Overseeing SAM is an essential responsibility of the SWG.

SWG PURPOSE

1. To support efforts to restore the Puget Sound ecosystem and protect water quality and stream habitat throughout Western Washington.
2. To sustainably implement SAM – a cooperative, permittee-driven stormwater monitoring and assessment program.
3. To provide actionable information for stormwater managers about reducing harm caused by stormwater through SAM, convening the SWG, and working collaboratively with partners.

WORK PLAN TASKS

The SWG's current areas of focus are on implementation and communication.

Implementation Tasks

Task 1: Support, manage, staff, and lead the implementation of the SWG.

Task 2: Oversee Ecology's administration of the SAM pooled resources account and the implementation of SAM projects.

Task 3: Continue to support the SWG 6PPD Subgroup in their efforts to advance the stormwater management of 6PPD, 6PPD-quinone, and tire wear particles.

Task 4: Engage in further conversations around regional monitoring of runoff from agricultural sources.

Task 5: Bridge stormwater work with the implementation of the Healthy Environmental for All (HEAL) Act and regional environmental justice initiatives.

Task 6: Update the SWG Charter.

Communication Tasks

Task 7: Reintegrate the SWG into PSEMP by participating in PSEMP Work Group Lead Meetings.

Task 8: Increase the connection between the general SWG and SWG caucuses.



Task 9: Communicate regularly with stormwater managers, policy makers, and other interested parties.

SUBGROUPS AND COMMITTEES

As of the date of this work plan adoption, the SWG is coordinating with numerous groups that are advising and supporting our recommendations for SAM and regional stormwater actions. Since 2008 we have formed and provided direction to numerous SWG subgroups; established a formal committee to oversee the pooled resources funding account; and have members and staff participating in other PSEMP work groups as needed to coordinate SWAMPSS implementation. Some previous subgroups have disbanded or are now included in other PSEMP work groups. During this work plan we will interact with the groups listed below.

Active SWG Subgroups with Open Membership and Participation

- 6PPD
- Receiving Waters Status and Trends
- Effectiveness Study Solicitation

SWG Subgroups To Be Reconvened Through This Work Plan

- Agriculture

SWG Caucuses Representing Specific Groups

- Municipal
- State
- Federal
- Business
- Environmental
- Tribal
- Port
- Agriculture

Committees with Formally Assigned Stakeholder Representation

- Pooled Resources Oversight Committee (PRO-C)

PROPOSED MEETING DATES

The SWG will meet in person four times per year and may hold additional meetings depending upon the issues we need to discuss. All meetings are Wednesdays from 9am – 12pm PST.

- In 2024: February 7, May 15, September 11, and November 13.
- In 2025: February 12, May 14, September 10, and November 12.



SWG subgroups, PRO-C, and other PSEMP work groups will set meeting dates as needed by their chairs and assigned staff.

IMPLEMENTATION TASKS

Task 1: Support, manage, staff, and lead the implementation of the SWG.

Since 2008 a broad, diverse membership has engaged regional stakeholders in the process of developing a regional stormwater assessment and monitoring program.

Ecology has assigned staff to support the work group and hired a SAM Coordinator and a SAM Scientist. Participating entities provide additional support, expertise, and services.

Every two years we will discuss work plan updates in the fall and officially adopt changes at the meeting directly prior to the new year. We will continue to evaluate our progress and adapt the work plans as needed. A chair and vice chair for two year terms will be nominated at the first meeting and selected in the second meeting of odd-numbered years. The chair executes the duties described in the SWG's bylaws.

Timeline

Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pursue funding and leverage opportunities as they become known- Solicit participation in the SWG and our subgroups
February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Adopt 2024-2025 Work Plan- Vote on in-person annual meetings
November 2024	Evaluate annual work plan progress at November meeting
February 2025	Nominate SWG Chair and Vice Chair
May 2025	Vote to approve SWG Chair and Vice Chair; 2-year term begins
September 2025	Discuss annual updates to our two-year work plan
November 2025	Vote to adopt the 2026-2027 SWG Work Plan



Task 2: Oversee Ecology's administration of the SAM pooled resources account and the implementation of SAM projects.

The annual SAM budget is about \$2.3M. The SWG has a formally established role in overseeing Ecology's service as the administrative and project management entity for pooling NPDES municipal stormwater permittees' funds. The SWG also approves of SAM projects and studies, and SAM will contract SWG-approved SAM projects. SAM staff manage 10-15 contracts at any given time. In 2023, SAM concluded the Round 4 process of soliciting for new studies. In 2024-2025, SAM will complete the Round 5 process for additional studies.

The Pooled Resources Oversight Committee (PRO-C) was established in 2014. The SWG confirms all seven acting members of the PRO-C and their alternates as positions come open. The PRO-C chair and SAM Coordinator report on SAM implementation and any budget or contracting issues at every SWG meeting.

For the duration of this work plan, the SWG will aim to accomplish three primary goals with the Stormwater Action Monitoring (SAM) Program:

1. Oversee Ecology's administration of the SAM pooled resources account and implementation of SAM projects.
2. Oversee SAM status and trends monitoring and assessment in small streams and marine nearshore areas.
3. Begin Round 5 selection process for SAM effectiveness studies and source identification projects.

To support SAM, the SWG will:

- Receive and discuss regular budget and progress reports from our Pooled Resources Oversight Committee (PRO-C).
- Receive and discuss the PRO-C report card on SAM when it is published
- Provide Ecology with input and decisions needed to successfully implement SAM.
- Hear findings of completed SAM deliverables and projects.
- Start a fifth round of SAM study selection.
- Receive recommendations from the SWG 6PPD Subgroup for the current and future study of stormwater management of 6PPD, 6PPD-quinone, and tire wear particles.
- Analyze and report on status and trend monitoring data collected. Develop recommendations for future sampling.
- Make recommendations for future nearshore sediment monitoring.



Timeline: SAM Oversight

Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- PRO-C reports to SWG at every SWG meeting- SWG hears and discusses updates on SAM projects at SWG meetings- SAM scientists meet with PSEMP work groups and SWG to discuss ongoing adaptations and clarifications to SAM's study designs- Status and Trends Subgroup discussions on small streams, mussels, sediment; coordination with other PSEMP work groups as appropriate
September 2024	Review and discuss the PRO-C report card
February, May, September, and November 2024 and 2025	SAM publishes quarterly reports; SWG reviews and discusses quarterly reports at subsequent meetings
May 2024 and 2025	SAM publishes Annual Report; SWG reviews and discusses at subsequent meeting
As needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Effectiveness study project leads present results on completed studies- US Geological Survey (USGS) presents update on SAM small stream monitoring implementation to the SWG- WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) presents update on SAM mussel contaminant monitoring- Clark County presents findings of Lower Columbia urban streams monitoring

Timeline: Round 5 SAM Study Selection Process

September 2024	Discuss need to reconvene the Effectiveness Study Solicitation Subgroup to plan SAM Round 5 solicitation at SWG's September meeting
Fall 2024	Reconvene Effectiveness Subgroup to recommend topics and plan SAM Round 5 solicitation
February 2025	SWG discusses recommended list of topics for SAM Round 5
May 2025	SWG finalizes list of topics and process for SAM Round 5
Summer 2025	SAM Round 5 solicitation process begins



- September 2025 SWG discusses SAM Letters of Interest (LOIs)
- February 2026 SWG discusses SAM Full Proposals
- May 2026 SWG selects projects for funding and recommends timing of contracting

Task 3: Continue to support the SWG 6PPD Subgroup in their efforts to advance the stormwater management of 6PPD, 6PPD-quinone, and tire wear particles.

For over 20 years, people were observing coho salmon returning to urban streams and rivers in the Puget Sound region that were dying before they could lay their eggs. The culprit was unknown, but it seemed linked to toxic chemicals running off our roads and highways. In 2020, a group of researchers finally [made a breakthrough](#) — they pinpointed a specific chemical, 6PPD-quinone, as the cause of coho deaths.

6PPD-quinone or ‘6PPD-q’, is formed when 6PPD, a chemical preservative found in tires and tire wear particles, comes into contact with ozone. 6PPD-q can then wash into rivers and streams when it rains, killing migrating coho salmon, negatively impacting rainbow, steelhead, and brook trout, threatening Tribal Treaty Rights, and potentially causing other environmental and human impacts. Since 6PPD is presumed to be in all tires, 6PPD and 6PPD-quinone have widespread impacts across our state and the world.

In 2021, the SWG began sponsoring the SWG 6PPD Subgroup, which convenes on a quarterly basis as an information sharing space to address 6PPD, 6PPD-q, and tire wear particles in stormwater. The SWG 6PPD Subgroup can also provide recommendations for new SAM projects and additional research needs for all subgroup members.

Timeline

- Ongoing
 - Continue to share new studies and knowledge about 6PPD
 - Hold discussions on strategic stormwater management approaches and research needs related to 6PPD, 6PPD-quinone, and tire wear particles
 - Discuss permit implementation requirements
- June 2024 Make recommendations for SAM Round 5 projects
- March, June, September, and December 2024 and 2025 Hold SWG 6PPD Subgroup quarterly meetings, including 1 in-person meeting (likely in the Summer)



Task 4: Engage in further conversations around regional monitoring of runoff from agricultural sources.

Through this task, the SWG seeks to support the development of a strategy and recommendations for implementing regional monitoring related to runoff from agricultural areas.

New recommendations are needed to address agricultural stormwater runoff issues in a broader, more comprehensive way. The SWG commissioned a subgroup in 2011 to propose expanding the [2010 Strategy](#) and building upon the [Recommendations for Municipal Stormwater Permit Monitoring](#) and other efforts to address agricultural issues. The subgroup assembled several recommendations which the SWG discussed and approved in 2011-2014.

It would be beneficial for an agricultural subgroup to consider feedback given by the SWG previously and currently, findings from SAM small streams monitoring, ongoing WSDA pesticide sampling, and new Puget Sound regional initiatives to reduce nutrients in marine waters and toxics in fish. The subgroup will then work to draft an implementation plan that includes collective recommendations for monitoring agricultural runoff. SWG will continue to seek funding for a public workshop to get broad stakeholder input and buy-in prior to finalization of the strategy.

Timeline

2024	Reconvene subgroup, discuss feedback from SWG and scientific findings from SAM/WSDA studies in 2015, and propose next steps
2025	Recommended scientific framework, implementation plan, and funding approach

Task 5: Bridge stormwater work with the implementation of the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act and regional environmental justice initiatives.

A landmark environmental justice act, the Healthy Environment For All (HEAL) Act (Senate Bill 5141), was passed by the WA State Legislature in 2021. This bill seeks to advance environmental justice in our state through several significant actions. [As summarized by Front and Centered](#), the HEAL Act:

- Codifies environmental justice into state law
- Directs investments of environmental benefits to communities disproportionately impacted by pollution or climate change



- Affirms the sovereignty of Tribal Nations and creates requirements for Tribal consultation when triggered by significant state agency actions
- Advances equitable community engagement and self-determination in environmental planning
- Created the statewide [Environmental Justice Council](#)
- Requires state agencies to conduct an environmental justice assessment for significant projects
- Advances the [Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) as a policy planning tool

The work of stormwater managers and planners can positively or negatively impact communities across WA State and also could exacerbate existing inequities if environmental justice is not considered in planning processes. One clear way this can occur is through pollution prevention programs - or the lack thereof in many communities. The SWG can be a platform for discussing challenges and opportunities created by the HEAL Act, as to improve conditions in represented municipalities. The SWG could achieve this through:

- Creating space at SWG meetings to share challenges and opportunities around HEAL Act implementation, environmental justice impacts, and equitable public and Tribal engagement and consultation
- Sharing tools for more effective and just stormwater planning and management, including the Environmental Health Disparities Map
- Hosting presentations from staff working to implement the HEAL Act, including Ecology's Water Quality Program Environmental Justice Planner
- Hosting presentations from stormwater managers and planners who engage with environmental justice and Tribal sovereignty in their work
- Hosting presentations from MS4 permit writers on implementing environmental justice, community engagement, and Tribal consultation requirements

Timeline

- Ongoing
- Organize at least one annual presentation on environmental just for SWG general meetings
 - Hold space at SWG meetings to discuss HEAL Act and environmental justice challenges and opportunities

Task 6: Update the SWG Charter.

The initial charter for the SWG was developed and adopted in December of 2008 and still remains in its original context today. The charter establishes the purpose, objectives and structure of the SWG. Given that the charter has not received updates in quite some time and



that SWG objectives have morphed over time, an update for 2024 is scheduled to begin in May of this year.

Timeline

- May 2024 Present draft SWG Charter to SWG
- September 2024 Vote to adopt new SWG Charter at SWG meeting

COMMUNICATION TASKS

Task 7: Reintegrate the SWG into PSEMP by participating in PSEMP Work Group Lead Meetings.

This work plan aims to strengthen the relationship between the SWG and its umbrella organization - the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP). To achieve this, SWG co-chairs will participate in PSEMP as a topical work group and engage with other PSEMP work groups as appropriate. PSEMP also has a standing agenda item on all SWG agendas, where a PSEMP representative can share with SWG participants notable PSEMP news.

The co-chairs will act as the liaison between PSEMP and the SWG, and through this responsibility they will:

- Participate in regular PSEMP Work Group Lead meetings
- Provide regular SWG and SAM updates to the PSEMP Steering Committee
- Work with PSEMP to enhance all-caucus involvement at SWG meetings
- Help realign SWG work with PSEMP’s Strategic Plan

Timeline

- Ongoing Co-chairs attend regular PSEMP Work Group Lead meetings and provide updates between the SWG and PSEMP
- January, April, August, September 2024 and 2025 Ecology’s SWG coordinator will reach out to PSEMP at least 1 month prior to SWG meetings to organize PSEMP agenda items

Task 8: Increase the connection between the general SWG and SWG caucuses.

The SWG supports several active caucuses, each which represent different interest groups. These include the Municipal, State, Federal, Business, Environmental, Tribal, Port, Agriculture



caucuses. In 2024-2025, the SWG will seek to enhance the relationship between the general SWG and SWG caucuses. To accomplish this, the SWG co-chairs will work to ensure that they maintain a robust means of gathering input from SWG caucus members and will creatively engage with existing and interested members of SWG caucuses.

Timeline

- Ongoing
- Attend caucus meetings as appropriate
 - Solicit feedback from caucuses on how the SWG can best support caucuses
 - Encourage interested parties to join caucuses, as appropriate
- February 2024
- Release the SWG Member Engagement Survey to better understand who constitutes SWG membership, including participation in caucuses

Task 9: Communicate regularly with stormwater managers, policy makers, and other interested parties.

The SWG aims to support stormwater managers' needs to share SAM findings with staff, public works directors, permit managers, city managers, and local elected officials, and educate them about SAM and the SWG. To accomplish this, the SWG helps communicate SAM findings to stormwater managers and other key audiences, invites interested parties to hear presentations on SAM findings, and helps distribute SAM communications projects like fact sheets, booklets, videos, newsletters, and annual reports. The SWG also provides a forum to discuss regulatory or rulemaking changes that might affect the work of SWG members, and when appropriate, provides coordinated feedback on those changes. The SWG is committed to continuing to improve public communications, and will continue to solicit for feedback to better these communications.

Timeline

- Ongoing
- Share SAM communications with interested parties
 - Invite interested parties to SWG meetings to hear SAM presentations at least 2 weeks prior to meetings
 - Provide a space for SWG members to discuss and provide comments on regulatory and rulemaking changes
 - Solicit for feedback on how to improve communications with stormwater managers