

WASHINGTON SEA GRANT

2024-2027

STRATEGIC PLAN





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ABOUT WASHINGTON SEA GRANT



OVERVIEW

For more than 50 years, WSG has served the Pacific Northwest and the nation by funding high quality marine research and working with communities, managers, businesses, educators and the public to advance regional understanding and sustainable use of ocean and coastal resources. Over this time, WSG has gained deep experience and learned lessons that have shaped the organization's vision for the next 50 years.

Based at the University of Washington (UW), WSG is part of a national network of 34 Sea Grant colleges and institutions located in U.S. coastal and Great Lakes states and territories. The National Sea Grant College Program is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and funded through federal-university partnerships.

WSG's location at the UW provides access to one of the nation's largest research universities and a leading recipient of federal science support. As one of 16 core units within the UW College of the Environment, WSG draws on the college's academic strengths in fisheries, marine science and policy. WSG also

works with many other colleges and departments in the UW system, as well as other academic and research institutions throughout the Pacific Northwest, to support both faculty and students.

WSG supports the needs of an even larger set of partners and organizations statewide, with offices located in coastal districts. Primary among our partners are local industries and businesses, community and nonprofit organizations, local and tribal governments, NOAA and other federal and state agencies, K-12 educators and students, institutions of higher learning, news media and the public.

At all levels, WSG relies on an engaged and active advisory committee that provides ideas, perspective, feedback and direction on the implementation of WSG's mission. The committee is structured to reflect a broad range of perspectives from relevant sectors and geographies that Washington Sea Grant serves.

2024 – 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN



The 2024 – 2027 WSG Strategic Plan represents a balanced and realistic approach to investing in research, outreach, education, communications and partnerships. It builds on existing capabilities to address unique challenges and opportunities at the university, community, state, regional and national levels. Through the strategic planning processes at the national and state level, four program areas were identified for WSG for 2024 – 2027: environmental literacy and workforce development, resilient communities and economies, healthy coastal ecosystems, and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. These program areas respond to issues of major importance to WSG constituents and partners, including NOAA, the National Sea Grant Office, research scientists and WSG stakeholders throughout the Pacific Northwest.

In developing this strategic plan, WSG relied heavily on information provided by its staff, advisory committee and constituents. WSG staff provided early input to the plan. In addition, more than 180 respondents to an online survey provided input to inform the initial draft. The final plan incorporates WSG staff and advisory committee review, discussion and feedback.

VISION

WSG envisions healthy, vibrant and productive marine ecosystems together with resilient, prosperous and engaged coastal communities in Washington state.

MISSION

The WSG mission is to help people and marine life thrive by supporting research, technical expertise and educational activities that foster the responsible use and conservation of ocean and coastal ecosystems.

VALUES

To accomplish its mission and achieve its vision, WSG adheres to a set of core values focused on achieving positive environmental and societal impact. It seeks to forge tools, foster insights, build capacity and invest in relationships for sustainable management, enjoyment and use of Washington's marine resources to support safe and prosperous fisheries and aquaculture, rich cultural and maritime heritage, resilient communities, and healthy ecosystems. Facilitating practical and collaborative solutions to today's ocean and coastal issues, WSG supports a culture of scientific integrity and serves as a trusted source of place-based information and real-world expertise relevant to the people and places of Washington. WSG seeks to create access to resources and opportunities for everyone in Washington, and to incorporate the breadth of the state's perspectives and priorities in all that we do.

PARTNERSHIPS AS A CROSS-CUTTING PRINCIPLE

WSG endorses and is committed to pursuing activities to cultivate and sustain partnerships by integrating the expertise and capabilities of partners from international, federal, tribal, state and local communities as well as from academia, nongovernmental organizations and industry.

Partnerships are a cornerstone of the Sea Grant model. WSG cultivates partnerships by valuing and engaging the priorities, expertise, capabilities, and participation of many partners. WSG collaborates with international, federal, tribal, state and local governments; local communities; businesses; people from academia; K-12 schools and nongovernmental organizations on a wide variety of marine-related research, engagement and education projects.

PROGRAM AREAS

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1	An environmentally literate public participates in lifelong formal and nonformal learning opportunities.
Goal 2	The future workforce is skilled and offered career pathways in fields that are critical to coastal and ocean economies and ecosystem health.
Desired Outcomes	• Science-based educational opportunities for students and the public promote environmental literacy and learning for all ages • Rigorous community science and stewardship programs improve environmental literacy, promote sustainable ocean and coastal use, and contribute to regional science and management needs. • Programs for K-16 youth and adult learners enhance environmental literacy and provide a pathway to marine-related careers in environmental and maritime sectors. • Professional development opportunities for college students and recent graduates build a skilled workforce. • Future crew in the aquaculture and fisheries workforce will have entry-level skills and opportunities to secure new jobs and current managers will gain knowledge to address critical workforce shortages.

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES

Goal 3	Washington Coastal communities and maritime sectors pursue analysis, planning and development of strategies that improve resilience to coastal hazards and changing environmental conditions.
Goal 4	Washington communities are prepared for coastal hazards.
Goal 5	Coastal water resources are enhanced, sustained and protected to meet the needs of Washington communities, economies and ecosystems.
Desired Outcomes	• Coastal communities have improved understanding of coastal hazards and increased capacity to apply information towards improving their resilience. • Research, partnerships, technical assistance, training programs and other tools support state and local economic development and planning needs, including plans to assess and reduce the impacts of hazards such as sea level rise and tsunamis. • Engagement of managers and stakeholders facilitates and balances multiple demands for ocean and coastal resources while preserving existing sustainable uses and community priorities. • Improved approaches are implemented to address toxic, nutrient and pathogen contaminants and the impact of human activities on water quality and quantity. • Coastal residents, vessel operators and businesses use best practices to reduce pollution and protect marine water quality.

PROGRAM AREAS

HEALTHY COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

Goal 6	Ocean and coastal habitats, ecosystems and living marine resources are valued and understood, leading to their protection, enhancement and restoration.
Goal 7	Ocean and coastal resources are protected and managed by applying sound science, technologies and place-based knowledge to foster responsible use through ongoing environmental change.
Goal 8	Washington's communities have access to use, enjoy and benefit from coastal environments and resources, and engage in decision-making around protecting, enhancing and restoring these ecosystems.
Desired Outcomes	• Understanding of ocean and coastal ecosystems, habitats and living marine resources is improved. • Enhanced interdisciplinary information and understanding in ecosystem-based management. • Information and approaches improve to address environmental stressors like ocean acidification, harmful algal blooms and aquatic invasive species. • Effective approaches and technologies are used to protect, enhance and restore ecosystem function and services. • Collaborations and partnerships support planning, research and innovative solutions to address coastal resource management needs.

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Goal 8	Fisheries and aquaculture continue to supply wholesome seafood, jobs and economic and community benefits.
Goal 9	Natural resources are sustainably managed to support communities and industries including commercial, recreational, subsistence fisheries and aquaculture.
Desired Outcomes	• Information, tools, technical assistance and training support sustainable aquaculture operations, product quality, and vibrant and resilient fisheries and aquaculture. • Training and information increase maritime worker safety and well-being in fisheries and aquaculture sectors. • Community members have access to wholesome and high-quality wild-harvested and cultured seafood products. • Understanding of environmental factors that affect fisheries and aquaculture and fishery and aquaculture resources is improved. • Tools and approaches are used to improve fisheries and aquaculture management, productivity, and ecological and economic sustainability.



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