

PREFACE

The Bainbridge Island Nearshore Assessment was funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) as part of its mission to support habitat protection and restoration projects. This project was initiated, in part, as a result of the recent listing of Puget Sound chinook salmon as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act and other proposed listings for Puget Sound marine species. The factors contributing to the decline of these species are complex and include, among other factors, the loss and modification of habitat caused by human activities across the region. Some of the early research suggests that the ecological functions and processes which form the habitat that support those species need to be maintained and protected in order to sustain natural populations. While Bainbridge Island does not naturally support freshwater use by chinook salmon, the City does include approximately 48.5 miles of saltwater shoreline which plays a critical role in the life-cycle of Puget Sound chinook and other species of concern. The overarching goal of this project and the City’s Salmon Recovery and Conservation Strategy is to collect and employ critical information to ensure that Bainbridge Island provides and maintains a healthy and functional ecosystem that contributes to sustainable salmonid populations within the region.

The goals of the Nearshore Assessment are to 1) conduct a baseline characterization of the Bainbridge Island nearshore environment and assess its ecological health and function, 2) identify restoration and preservation opportunities and develop a strategy for ranking and prioritizing opportunities, and 3) develop a management framework based on the functions and processes of nearshore ecology. The findings of the project will be used by the City and the Bainbridge Island community to propose, pursue, and make informed decisions about nearshore preservation and restoration opportunities. The knowledge gathered regarding management of nearshore resources will also be integrated into the City’s regulations that govern the development and use of the nearshore.

Management of the Bainbridge Island Nearshore Assessment was provided by the City of Bainbridge Island (COBI) with technical review and support provided by technical representatives of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and the City’s Environmental Technical Advisory Committee.

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City of Bainbridge Island
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Because of the nature of this document, there has been an extensive use of figures and tables from existing publications, especially the State of the Nearshore Ecosystem prepared for King County and the recent White Papers prepared for the Washington State Departments of Ecology (WDOE), Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and Transportation (WSDOT). King County produced many of the graphics used in this report. Additionally, many of the photographs used throughout the document were taken by the Washington State Department of Ecology and Applied Environmental Services, Inc.

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Cover Photos:

Left photo from the City of Bainbridge Island web page (2001); right-top photo: WA Department of Ecology (2000); and right-bottom photo: Applied Environmental Services, Inc. (2001).

LIMITATIONS

As with any report, there are limitations (inherent or otherwise) that must be acknowledged. This report is limited to the subjects covered, materials reviewed, and data available. The authors and reviewers have made a sincere attempt to provide accurate and thorough information using the most current and complete information available and their own best professional judgement. Since this document is a summary of the best available science, the reader is encouraged to become familiar with the original documents cited. Any questions regarding the content of this report should be referred to the original authors and the City of Bainbridge Island staff responsible for its production.