

ISLAND COUNTY NEARSHORE ACQUISITION STRATEGY

Update Presentation Philip Bloch, Confluence Environmental Company (Phil.Bloch@Confenv.com) August 18, 2021

Photo credit: WA Department of Ecology

REVIEW OF ORIGINAL PROJECT

- WRIA 6 Lead Entity oversaw a restoration prioritization tool for nearshore acquisition within Island County in 2019 that was developed jointly by Confluence and the Whidbey Camano Land Trust
- The scope of the original project was to develop a science-based prioritization of shoreline parcels in Island County, to acquire parcels for conservation (and associated restoration, where applicable) of nearshore and estuarine processes, and to assist the recovery of salmonid populations that use the nearshore areas of Island County.
- Parcels were scored based on three categories:
 - I. Landscape Context
 - 2. Ecosystem Processes
 - 3. Habitat Function

ADDITIONAL TASKS

Intertidal parcels2.Adjacent ownership of parcels3.Connected wetlands or tidal systems

I. INTERTIDAL PARCELS

- Original prioritization focused on parcels along the shoreline that may or may not include adjacent tidelands
- Due to the dynamic nature of the intertidal zone, Island County does not keep record of the exact boundaries of tideland parcels
- Tideland parcel point data was attributed with relevant data (similar to polygon parcels)
 - Point data was combined with DNR dataset of intertidal and subtidal land to indicate potential for a parcel to include an intertidal portion



2. ADJACENT OWNERSHIP

- Parcel ownership is a key indicator of feasibility for acquisition
- Neighboring parcels were grouped based on similar taxpayer names
 - 669 adjacent parcel groups under common ownership were identified, containing 1,601 individual parcels
- Parcels included within an adjacent parcel group are indicated with a "Neighboring" attribute in the final dataset



3. WETLANDS AND HISTORIC NEARSHORE FEATURES

- Some parcels that are critical for future nearshore restoration efforts are not associated with the modern-day shoreline
- Utilized data on historic wetlands, historic estuarine complexes, and nearshore fill from the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP)
- 1,852 parcels were added to the original dataset
 - Updated dataset includes 8,712 parcels
- Updated set of parcels was scored according to the original framework



RESULTS

- Summary statistics largely mirror the results of the original scoring
 - Slight decrease in Habitat Function, likely due to parcels not immediately adjacent to shoreline that did not get points for proximity to eelgrass, forage fish spawning

Prioritization Category	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Landscape Context (max of 26 points)	0	24	8.0	5.4
Ecosystem Processes (max of 54 points)	0	51	18.7	6.4
Habitat Function (max of 20 points)	0	12	6.0	3.9
Overall Score (max of 100 points)	2	81	32.7	10.1

DRIFT CELL ANALYSIS

- Developed a secondary overlay to capture sites in the same 'neighborhood'
- Groups were assigned a secondary score reflecting the attributes of the drift cell parcels
- With two tiers of screening priority sites can be identified at multiple scales of analysis.
- Scoring approach modified slightly for drift cells



