

Watershed Action Agenda:

Priorities for Focus within the Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor-Islands Watershed

2009 through 2013



KGI Watershed Council

Fostering wise stewardship of our watershed

Prepared with assistance from
Pierce County Public Works and Utilities Surface Water Management Division

The mission of the KGI Watershed Council is to preserve, protect and restore the KGI Watershed by implementing the KGI Watershed Action Plan through activities that foster collaboration and involvement.

Acknowledgements

Erin Ewald - Chair, KGI Watershed Council

Liz Lathrop - Vice Chair, KGI Watershed Council

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All active members of the KGI who contributed to this Action Agenda!

Front cover photo: Marine nearshore looking south from the Whiteman Cove berm

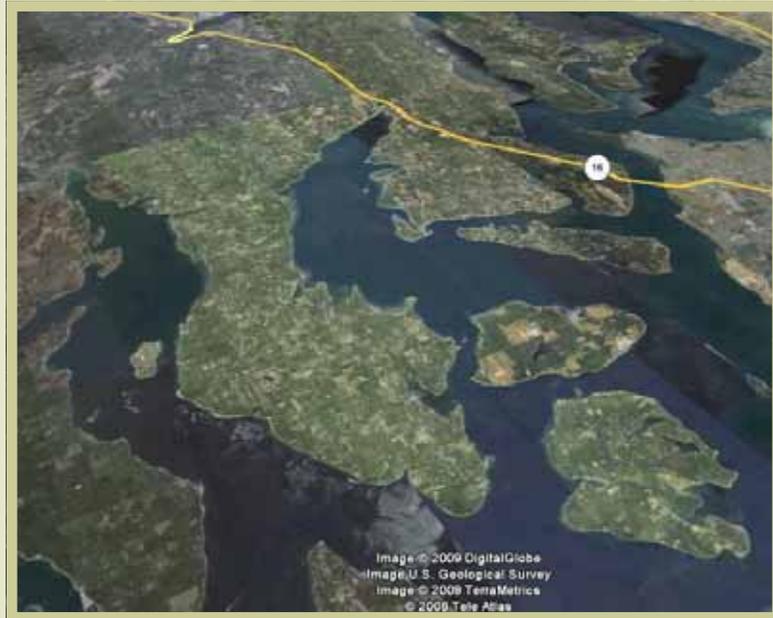
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Introduction to the Watershed



The Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor-Islands (KGI) Watershed is located in western Washington State, just west of the city of Tacoma and drains into Puget Sound. The KGI Watershed is actually a grouping of several small watersheds of similar size, geology, hydrology, and vegetation. The Watershed covers an area of approximately 101,000 acres and includes 179 miles of saltwater shoreline. Over 65,000 people live in the area.

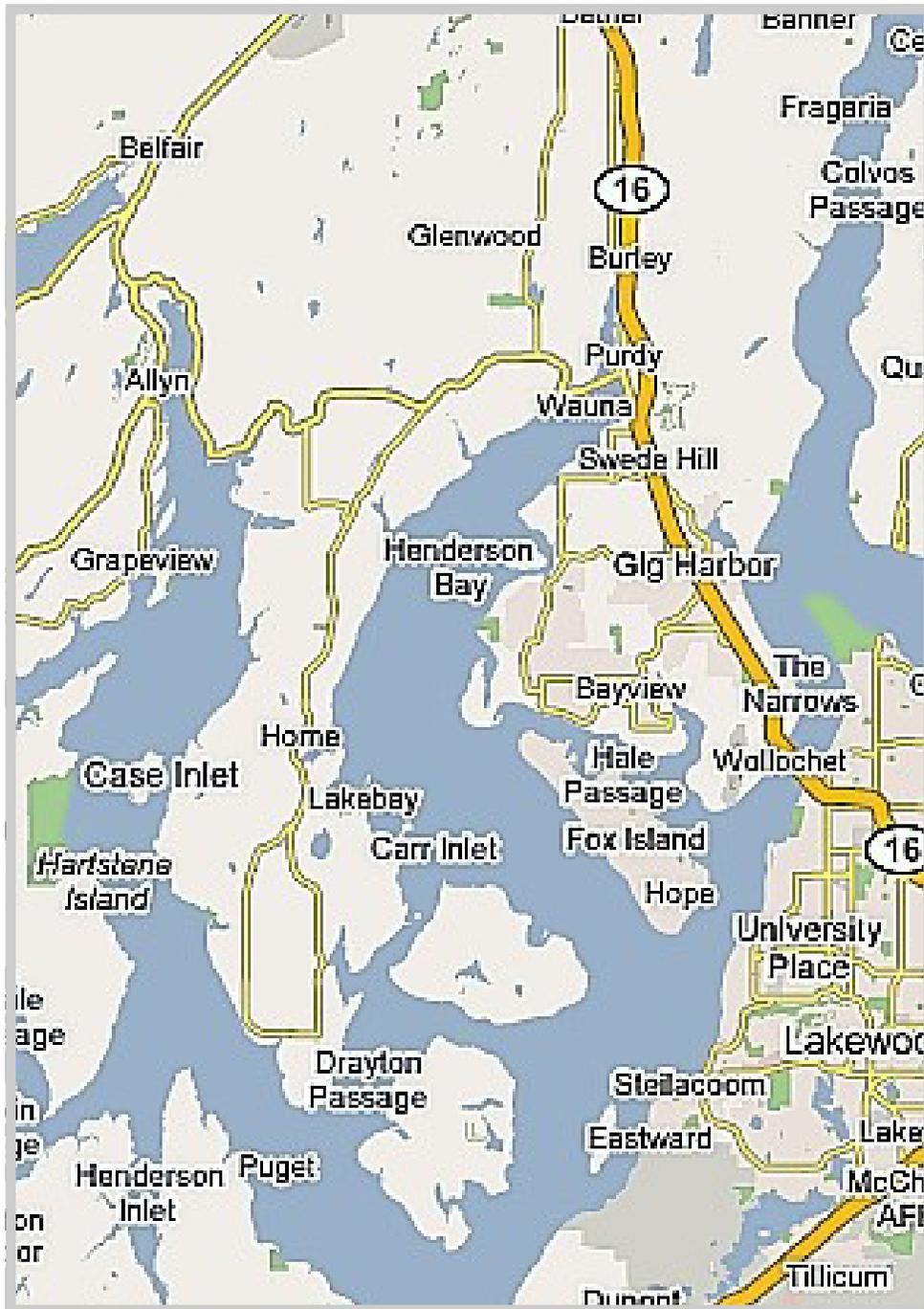
Since the mid-1980's a number of plans and activities have been developed to address problems related to water within the KGI Watershed. The majority of these efforts have been focused on improving water quality, particularly in shellfish growing areas.

In 1996, the KGI Watershed Management Committee was formed to create the KGI Watershed Action Plan (KGI Plan). The KGI Plan was prepared in accordance with the "Nonpoint Rule" (WAC 400-12) and focused on water quality problems from diffuse sources such as stormwater, agriculture, for-

estry, boats, and septic systems. The KGI Plan was completed in 1999 and adopted by Pierce County in 2000, Kitsap County in 2001, and the City of Gig Harbor in 2002.

After adoption, the KGI Watershed Council was formed to track and facilitate implementation of the KGI Plan. Since 2002, the KGI Council has continued to provide educational and networking opportunities. The Council developed the 5-year Action Agenda to focus and guide their efforts from 2009 through 2013. The intent of this document is to identify and prioritize those actions deserving the highest priority attention for implementation.

The Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor-Islands Watershed



The KGI Watershed Council



The purpose of the KGI Watershed Council is to foster wise stewardship of the KGI Watershed. The Council's **vision** for the watershed is to achieve and maintain a healthy and thriving condition. If the KGI Watershed Council is able to achieve this vision, we expect to see the following:

- Good habitat and high quality water will support a healthy and diverse population of native plants, animals, and aquatic organisms
- Surface water quality will be superior and beneficial to the health of fish, shellfish, macroinvertebrates, wildlife, and human populations
- Groundwater will be ample and safe for consumption by humans, animals, and plants
- Land development will be conscientiously sited and carried out in a manner that will protect beneficial uses of water and environmentally sensitive areas
- Stormwater will enter stream systems more gradually, with lower peak flows, and will preserve historic year-round flow levels
- Natural resource harvesting will be sustainable and equitable
- Shellfish growing areas will be numerous and produce shellfish which are abundant and safe for consumption
- The amount of solid waste generated, stored, and illegally dumped will be significantly reduced
- A clear, effective, cooperative system will be in place to identify problems and respond to water quality concerns
- Watershed residents will be educated about water quality issues and will take action to protect, restore and steward the environment

Because this vision requires collaboration to achieve, there are certain organizations (both

old and new) whose representatives have consistently participated in the Watershed Council over the years. These **members** include:

- Peninsula Light Company
- Pierce County Surface Water Management
- Pierce Conservation District
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
- Sylvia Lake Country Club
- Key Peninsula Metro Parks

- Peninsula Parks
- Audubon Society
- City of Gig Harbor
- South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
- Harbor Wild Watch
- Crescent Valley Alliance
- Friends of Pierce County

The Council is always looking for new members to broaden their representation of the KGI Watershed and fulfill their mission of encouraging wise stewardship.



**The purpose of the KGI Watershed Council
is to promote wise stewardship of the
Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor-Islands Watershed.**

Priority Action Items 2008-2013 – Critical Objectives



The purpose of the “Priority Action Items” is to clarify where the efforts of the KGI Watershed Council will be directed over the next five years. Each

item includes a short description, a listing of the Council’s objectives related to that item, and a description of the outcomes that might be expected if the Council is able to implement the objectives effectively.

Implementation of the priorities identified in this Action Agenda will be coordinated by the Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor-Islands Watershed Council and its members. Scheduling of specific activities will occur through the development of an annual work plan for the KGI Watershed Council. While the KGI Council commits to implementing the critical objectives included in this Action Agenda, the ranking of highest priority actions may vary based on the resources and opportunities that become available over the next five years.

The **resources** needed to implement this action agenda will need to be agreed upon by

both the KGI Watershed Council and its member organizations. Currently, staff resources assigned to the KGI Watershed Council by Pierce County Surface Water Management, Pierce County Government Relations, and the Pierce Conservation District are equal to approximately 0.75 Full Time Equivalent (FTE). In order to fully implement all of the priority actions identified within this Action Agenda, an additional 1.5 FTE is needed.

Action Item #1: Natural Resources

Enhancing the natural resources found in the KGI Watershed is at the heart of the Council’s reason for being. Therefore, it is essential that we maintain our focus on natural resources in the future.

The Council will commit to enhancing the health of the Watershed for people, fish, and wildlife by:

- a) Maintaining and improving water quality by preventing and reducing sources of pollution;

- b) Protecting existing intact habitat; and
- c) Restoring ecosystem functions in areas where they've been compromised.

Desired Outcomes: We would like to see a trend toward improving water quality and macroinvertebrate sampling results, an increase rather than a loss of habitat, and an increase in the percentage of KGI residents who feel that the area's natural environment contributes to their physical health and quality of life.

Priority Actions:

- Work to establish new stream-focused community groups with on-the-ground restoration projects and other local activities
- Focus on water quality improvement in cooperation with Pierce County Shellfish Partners
- Continue to oversee implementation of the KGI Watershed Action Plan, particularly those actions which will result in the greatest water quality benefits (See Appendix A)

- Promote and encourage Low Impact Development and stormwater management
- Assist partners with land and easement acquisitions for the purpose of protecting high quality habitat (See Appendix B)
- Assist partners with actions that will improve or restore degraded habitat (See Appendix C)

Action Item #2: Monitoring

Monitoring is vital to measuring the health of the KGI Watershed. Measurements must be taken, analyzed, and shared if we are to understand what is occurring within the watershed and what conditions need attention.

The Council will commit to the following objective:

- a) Monitor watershed conditions and share results



Desired Outcomes: We would like to see monitoring occur within the KGI Watershed that is consistent, coordinated, diverse, and useful in evaluating the condition of the watershed. We would also like to see this information being accessed and used by decision-makers and watershed residents.

Priority Actions:

- Advocate for the long term, consistent collection of the following indicators:
 - ◇ Water Quality indicators including, at a minimum:
 - Fecal coliform
 - Temperature
 - Dissolved Oxygen
 - Nutrients
 - Turbidity
 - ◇ Instream flow
 - ◇ Saltwater intrusion
 - ◇ Species diversity – flora and fauna
 - Anadromous fish
 - Benthic macroinvertebrates (using B-IBI)
 - Bird counts
 - Invasive species
 - ◇ Land Use
 - Impervious cover percentage
 - Vegetative cover
 - ◇ Behavioral indicators (such as recycling rates, carpooling, and purchasing rates for green products) will be included but need to be defined first.
- Work with other agencies to identify and track, add, or expand additional indicators such as Frog Watch and NatureMapping
- Publish State of the Watershed Report
- Make optimal use of the web to share and publish information
- Coordinate with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department’s environmental health indicators project

Action Item #3: Education and Outreach Activities

Since the health of the watershed is in the hands of the many people who live, work, and play in this area, it is crucial that we provide the community with the information they need to make good stewardship decisions. Sponsoring and participating in specific events allows the Council to provide direct service to the community and opportunities to assist partner members.

The Council will commit to the following objectives:

- a) Promoting communication, learning, and participation among people with interests in the watershed
- b) Creating an educational program based on current resource issues and interests

Desired Outcomes: We would like to see a substantial increase in the number of watershed residents who are making an effort to reduce their impact on the watershed. Also, we would like to see an increase in the number of people actively participating on the Council, with our partner organizations, and in natural resource events. The Council would have a sophisticated and well-maintained educational program that maximizes learning and information sharing opportunities.

Priority Actions:

- Participate in community fairs and celebrations
- Host workshops and tours with key topics to include septic systems, shellfish issues, livestock and pet waste
- Explore alternative learning opportunities such as a book clubs or discussion groups

Action Item #4: Partnering

Partnering allows the Watershed Council and its members to leverage the strengths and resources of different organizations to accomplish more than would be possible individually. It also improves communication and provides networking opportunities.

The Council will commit to the following objectives:

- a) Recommending and advocating ways that other governments and organizations can implement the KGI Plan
- b) Providing assistance for watershed enhancement plans & projects

Desired Outcomes: We would like to see a strong coalition of local organizations that are able to maximize their strengths and interests. We want our partner organizations and jurisdictions to be actively work toward improving the health of the Watershed. Finally, we intend to acquire and share resources that will support our partners' efforts to benefit the Watershed.

Priority Actions:

- Update three local jurisdictions on Council activities
 - Continue to support partner organizations through Lu Winsor grant program
 - Expand our support of school-based programs
 - Promote the establishment of local "Friends of ..." groups
 - Establish contacts within the business community
-



Action Item #5: Communication and Organization

A strong organizational framework will allow the Council to be efficient, organized, and able to communicate clearly and through a variety of mediums.

The Council will commit to the following objective:

- a) Maintain efficient organizational administration & communication

Desired Outcomes: We would like to see a KGI Watershed Council organization that is able to support the efforts of its members and partners quickly and efficiently. We would like the organization to be able to offer personalized, localized services and information.

Priority Actions:

- Increase newsletter distribution
- Increase effectiveness and scope of event notification
- Maintain KGI Watershed Council website
- Host regular meetings

Appendix A

Brown & Caldwell Water Quality Priorities from the Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor-Islands Watershed Action Plan

In 2006, Pierce County Surface Water Management contracted with the consulting firm of Brown and Caldwell to review all of the Watershed Action Plans that had been prepared in Pierce County. Brown and Caldwell was asked to identify those actions items within each plan that would result in the greatest water quality improvements if implemented. The action items from the KGI Watershed Action Plan that Brown and Caldwell identified are listed below:

1. GN1 Establish Pet Waste Education Program
2. AF7 Encourage Riparian Buffering by Offering Landowners
 Technical and Financial Assistance
3. OS7 Hands-on Curricula for Schools in the Watershed
4. SW3 Institute an Impervious Cover Management Program
5. OS1 Survey Areas Potentially Impacted by Failing Onsite
 Sewage Systems
6. AF20 Distribute Generalized Best Management Practices for
 Farm and Forestry Management Within the Watershed
7. AF2 Establish Demonstration/Interpretive Sites
8. AF4 Establish Farm and Forestry Public Outreach and
 Education Program
9. AF1 Develop a Comprehensive Signage Program
10. SW4 Develop an Exhibit Showing the Benefits of Controlling
 Stormwater
11. AF8 Offer Curriculum on Environmental Issues Associated
 with Agriculture and Forestry Management to Local
 School Districts
12. AF19 Increase Development and Implementation of Farm
 Plans
13. OT14 Education Program for Golf Course Grounds Keepers

Appendix B

Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor-Islands Watershed Protection Priorities

In an effort to focus preservation and protection efforts within the KGI Watershed, the KGI Council has developed the following list of preferred locations for preservation. If resources became available for protection, preservation of these areas would provide the greatest benefit to the watershed. High quality habitat areas that are already owned by park organizations or by a land trust are not included on this list.

The highest priority water bodies for action from within this list will be identified within the Council's annual work plan.

Streams

- Rocky Creek
- Huge Creek
- Sullivan Gulch
- Wollochet Creek
- Warren Creek
- McCormick Creek
- Artondale Creek
- Vaughn Creek
- Lackey Creek
- Doc Weathers

Bays/Shoreline

- Filucy Bay
- Minter Bay
- Rocky Bay
- Dutcher Cove
- Vaughn Bay
- Carlson Cove
- Ketron Island
- Warren Creek
- West side Carr Inlet
(between Minter Bay and
Glen Cove)
- Soundview Camp

Lakes

- Herron
- Maloney
- Florence

Appendix C Key Peninsula-Gig Harbor-Islands Watershed Restoration Priorities

The following list identifies restoration priorities. If resources were made available for restoration, the KGI Council believes that rehabilitation of these areas would provide the greatest benefit to the health of the watershed.

The highest priority water bodies for action from within this list will be identified within the Council's annual work plan.

Streams

- Crescent Creek
- Nelyaly Creek
- Schoolhouse Creek
(Anderson Island)
- Burley Creek
- Minter Creek
- Little Minter Creek
- Donkey Creek
- Purdy Creek
- Goodnough Creek

Bays/Shoreline

- Wollochet Bay Estuary
- East Oro Bay Estuary
- Whiteman Cove
- Shaw's Cove
- Mouth of Purdy Creek

Lakes

- Sylvia Lake
- Crescent Lake
- Horseshoe Lake
- Bay Lake
- Wye Lake
- Lake Josephine

Wetlands

- Vaughn Creek



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Surface Water Management Division
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