


# IMPACT REPORT 2020 & 2021

*Protecting & Preserving the Waters of Puget Sound*



PUGET  
**SOUNDKEEPER®**



A close-up photograph of a rainbow trout jumping out of a small waterfall in a forest stream. The fish is in mid-air, its body arched, with a bright red belly and a rainbow-colored stripe along its side. The water is splashing and white with foam. The surrounding environment is lush with green moss on the rocks and fallen leaves in shades of brown and orange. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the fish and the water.

Puget Soundkeeper acknowledges that we are on the land of the Coast Salish peoples who have always been, and will continue to be, stewards of this region.



This Impact Report is our first to members and supporters since the Covid-19 pandemic began. This ongoing crisis has taken a toll, whether due to the virus itself or lockdown-related burdens and uncertainties. Soundkeeper's Board and staff express our sympathy to those of you experiencing loss and hardship over the past two years, and our gratitude for your unwavering commitment and involvement with our work.

The Report details our accomplishments in 2020 and 2021, and takes a look at where we're headed in 2022. As you'll discover, given the strength of our community, staff, and partnerships, even the global pandemic couldn't stop (nearly) four decades of momentum driving improvements in clean water protections for Puget Sound.

We had a great deal to celebrate during the past two years: a landmark victory protecting our state-wide waterways from animal feedlot manure pollution; a new state-wide, comprehensive plastic bag and polystyrene foam ban; the permanent closure of an old coal mine on the Green River that was a source of legacy water contamination; and over 300 waterfront cleanup events involving 2,500 dedicated volunteers. We hosted successful hybrid (live and online) engagement events, trainings, and advocacy sessions, keeping our programming nimble and responsive to the changing public health and safety demands of the past two years. We also added some talented new staff and Board members to our dedicated team.

As you read through this report, you will learn more about some of these successes and their impacts. South King County youth leaders involved in our Lost Urban Creeks program persisted in their restoration work despite Covid-19. Our successful clean water litigation wins provided millions of dollars to local watershed improvements, while our Clean Marinas certification program continues to grow.

And, throughout the report, learn about our plans for 2022 and beyond. Next year is the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. We intend to celebrate its achievements as a milestone that will drive further Sound-wide changes toward environmental justice, reduce impacts from new chemicals of concern on salmon populations, and address how climate change already affects our region.

Thank you, again, for your support during these difficult times, your continued commitment to clean water and healthy communities, and for being part of the Puget Soundkeeper family. We look forward to seeing you in 2022 and reporting the impacts of our work together.

With gratitude,



Sean



Sean T. Dixon  
Soundkeeper &  
Executive Director



# Stewardship

The onset of the global pandemic in 2020 forced Puget Soundkeeper's stewardship and volunteer programs into a period of rapid adaptation. In-person events were cancelled, then went virtual, and then shifted back to limited capacity with strict Covid-19 safety protocols. Our incredible volunteers adapted alongside us, staying engaged despite evolving public health uncertainties.

We hosted several virtual programs, connecting clean water stewards to the Sound when we couldn't meet in person. Our online educational forum about fireworks and water pollution replaced our usual July 5th cleanup on the shores of Lake Union.

We also launched social media engagement like #PSKVirtualCleanup and #MayRepurposeChallenge. It was inspiring to see volunteers care for their neighborhoods, and repurpose "trash" into useful items and art. These programs connected us to our community, which worked harder than ever: volunteer cleanups averaged 15 pounds of trash per person in 2020, compared with 4.5 pounds per person in 2019!

We were eager to come together in 2021 and get back on the water. We broadened our programming scope with first-time events in Kitsap and Jefferson Counties, plus an inaugural "Week of Action" cleanup series ranging from Bremerton to Port Townsend, Alki Beach to Edmonds, all during October's Salute to the Sound celebrations.

Soundkeeper volunteers remain ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work. We're grateful to be part of such a dedicated and enthusiastic community.

–Gillian Flippo, Stewardship Coordinator

*"It was a joy to leave the beach around the old point so clean  
**it felt renewed.**" –Port Townsend volunteer*



# Community Science

Soundkeeper partnerships extend beyond cleanups to include community science monitoring and surveys. Members, volunteers, and supporters collect data across every facet of our work to advance our shared advocacy goals.

**Marine Debris:** Each year, in partnership with the Ocean Conservancy and the International Coastal Cleanup, volunteers tally and weigh garbage removed from our beaches, waterfronts, and wetlands. This contributes to a global dataset used to drive progress and raise public awareness. Brand audits (trash removals in which Soundkeeper volunteers also note the prevalence of brand names) create momentum for producer responsibility policies, making waste generators more accountable for the full lifecycle of their products.

**Microplastics:** Soundkeeper tracks several emerging pollution issues, including microplastics. We take annual water quality samples at 74 locations around the Sound, and routinely find microplastics in each sample. This data supports program advocacy addressing pervasive, yet invisible, microplastic pollution.

Microplastic fibers, filaments, and fragments thinner than a human hair add urgency to the plastic pollution crisis. They clog fish gills, act as a magnet for heavy metals, and are ingested by marine life of all kinds. Thirty-four percent of microplastic comes from synthetic clothing fibers while another twenty-eight percent comes from car tires.

**Salmon Surveys:** Advocates, scientists, and agencies have tried for decades to determine why salmon die in urban waterways after swimming through stormwater. In 2020, local researchers isolated a car tire chemical called 6PPD that transforms into 6PPD-quinone after interacting with ozone. Stormwater sweeps 6PPD-quinone and tire microplastic off roads and into our urban waters. The chemical is now linked to the catastrophic coho salmon mortality that Soundkeeper volunteers track during annual October and November surveys. Their work aids our understanding of this extant crisis and generates actionable momentum for change.





The pandemic may have kept us locked down for most of the past two years, but it didn't interrupt our collaborations and it didn't prevent us from building community. Puget Soundkeeper formed a new relationship with International Rescue Committee in 2021. IRC in Seattle works with newly settled refugees as they become Washington residents, easing their transition by connecting them to resources and support.

We were privileged to help introduce our new neighbors to the Puget Sound and get folks into a kayak for the first time. Our IRC beach cleanup was a joy and highlight of the year. Soundkeeper celebrated this new partnership at our Salute to the Sound gala, featuring IRC in Seattle as one of our Inspiration Award winners. We look forward to deepening our relationship through water quality workshops, cleanups, and a community picnic in 2022.

Soundkeeper launched a partnership with the new Maritime High School, a collaborative project of Highline Public Schools, Northwest Maritime Center, Port of Seattle, and the Duwamish River Community Coalition. The Maritime High School has a mission to support students looking for careers in environmental, marine science, and maritime industries.

We're also committed to improving our reporting system so partners can efficiently document pollution. Our forthcoming "Water Reporter" app allows users to add photos and text directly from their phone. It georeferences every post and allows us to present pollution information on beautiful, accessible maps.

## Partnerships

*"Many in our community were **deeply connected** to soil, water, and farming back in their country.*

*Partnering with Puget Soundkeeper gives them the beautiful therapy of time near water."*

*–Kamal Adhikari,  
New Roots Specialist  
IRC in Seattle*





# Lost Urban Creeks

Lost Urban Creeks (LUC) is a community-led revival of the neglected waterways that flow through our urban neighborhoods and feed into the Puget Sound. These creeks and streams are often found in communities most affected by environmental injustice. The creeks themselves are impacted, unable to provide benefits like recreation, temperature regulation, and wildlife habitat.

Youth Leaders from Unleash the Brilliance (UTB), a unique local mentorship program, form our flagship LUC program. They work closely with Puget Soundkeeper and other partners to restore the health of South King County's Springbrook Creek. This accessible urban waterway runs through Kent, Renton, and Tukwila before discharging into the Duwamish River. LUC Youth Leaders protect Springbrook Creek through water quality monitoring, habitat restoration, and cleanups, and advocate for their communities at outreach events and stakeholder meetings.

These young people rose to the occasion in 2021. They remained resilient throughout the uncertainty of a global pandemic and produced a Springbrook Creek 2021 water quality report with policy recommendations for King County and the City of Renton. They created a geocaching game to inspire, educate, and encourage exploration in the area, and made history as standing witnesses in the first clean water lawsuit initiated against an industrial site on Springbrook Creek.

Soundkeeper expects to work with over 75 youth leaders in 2022, thanks to our dedicated collaborator Terrell Dorsey and his commitment to Unleash The Brilliance. Our programs will continue to integrate technology, with expanded story-maps and data visualization for learning and teaching. *–Anna Bachmann, Healthy Watersheds Program Manager*



qal'qaləxič

qʼúməčən

kawad

sà bas



*"Orca" is just one of many names for our region's most awe-inspiring resident. Above names are in Lushootseed, Klallam, Makah, and Quileute respectively.*



*A volunteer takes a water sample  
for microplastic testing.*







*Data from 2020 & 2021*

**8 tons**

...of garbage, debris,  
and waste removed  
from Puget Sound  
coasts and waterways  
by Soundkeeper  
volunteers and  
community partners.



**\$2.4 million**

...in water quality  
restoration and  
remediation funds  
generated by  
Soundkeeper's  
Clean Water Act  
litigation.



**34 marinas**

...newly certified as  
Clean Marinas.  
Soundkeeper is  
the only nonprofit  
running a state  
marina program  
in the nation.



**5,482 hours**

...of volunteer time  
spent at 320  
events, including  
140 community  
cleanups.



**10 lawsuits**

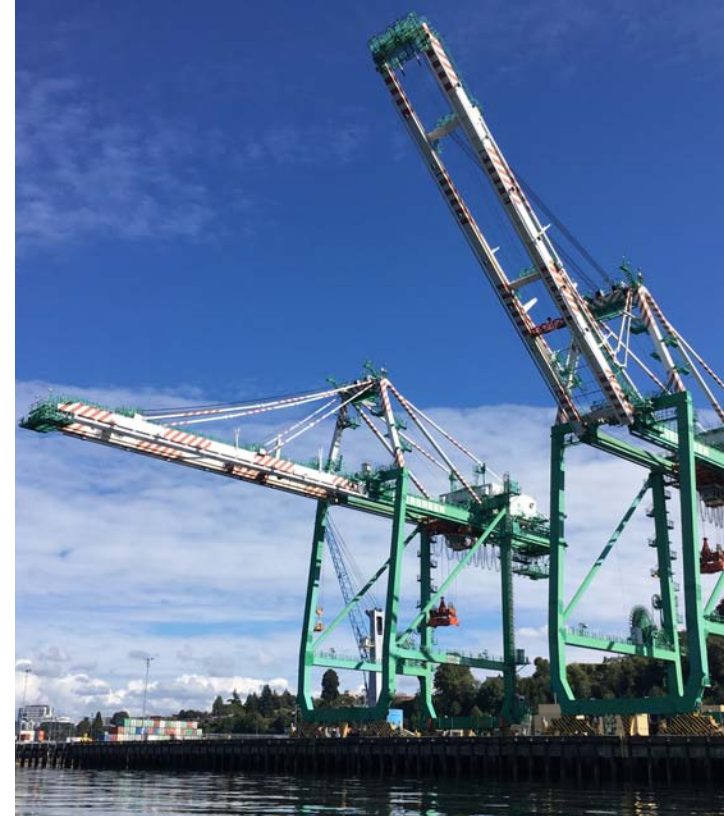
...filed or settled,  
including two  
against the Trump  
EPA, defending  
our shared waters.



**208 million  
gallons**

...of stormwater  
and wastewater  
filtered through  
enhanced treatment  
as a result of  
Soundkeeper lawsuits.

*Data from 2020 & 2021*





# Clean Water Advocacy

**Stormwater Management:** Stormwater is the number one source of toxic pollution to Puget Sound, annihilating our region's salmon stocks and constituting a grave environmental injustice for the communities, and Tribal and Indigenous people, that rely on salmon for sustenance and cultural practices.

Soundkeeper advanced our region's commitment to stormwater innovations over the past two years. We co-developed "Nature's Scorecard" with Washington Environmental Council, making it easy for Puget Sound residents to see how well their community utilizes Low Impact Development (LID) best practices to protect water quality. We pushed for increased green infrastructure investments, not only because such sites result in cleaner water, but because they also improve air quality, protect soil, and more.

Soundkeeper's stormwater advocacy took on a new level of urgency in 2020, when scientists identified the chemical 6PPD-quinone after decades of research into salmon pre-spawn mortality.

6PPD, a car-tire additive, transforms into 6PPD-quinone when exposed to ozone. It's particularly lethal to coho salmon, often killing them within minutes of contact. Tire dust, a leading microplastic pollutant, is laden with 6PPD-quinone as it wears off tires during normal use. This killer chemical joins a toxic soup flowing off paved surfaces and into our waterways via stormwater.

Research has long shown that biofiltration mitigates salmon mortality, and specifically stops coho salmon pre-spawn mortality. Soundkeeper helped change the law that requires this LID technique to be used.

Now, we know it provides yet another co-benefit: green infrastructure captures and filters runoff from our streets and parking lots, saving coho. We're collaborating across the region and beyond the Sound to ensure our government agencies implement the solutions we already know to be effective.

**CSOs & Wastewater:** Soundkeeper continues to lead a coalition of partners advocating for better community protections against Combined Sewer Overflows, particularly in the Duwamish Valley.

In 2021, King County and Seattle requested to delay control of these harmful pollutant sources, including in areas already struggling with environmental injustices. Soundkeeper tracks the often-opaque conversations about long term CSO control as they move through our local, state, and federal agencies.

*"I'm proud that Soundkeeper developed a new way to engage members and supporters in 2021. Our Advocacy 101 series was so successful we're now finessing it for youth audiences in 2022. This series creates a bridge to our membership, enabling us to work directly with the communities we serve. We can co-create policy, and **collectively achieve a shared vision** for the future of Puget Sound."*

*–Alyssa Barton, Policy Manager*



In 2020, Soundkeeper participated in the Department of Ecology's advisory committee to develop a proposal for a Nutrient General Permit. This permit will control excess nitrogen coming from Puget Sound's sewage treatment plants.

Soundkeeper pushed for transparency and environmental certainty throughout the public processes for these two state-led initiatives. We look forward to moving into the next phase in 2022, and continuing to advocate for Puget Sound's long-term health.

**Plastic Pollution Prevention:** Puget Soundkeeper is a proud member of the Plastic Free Washington/Washington Sin Plástico coalition, which successfully helped pass SB5323 in 2020. This law bans thin film carry-home plastic bags (also known as T-shirt bags) in Washington state. Similar laws in California reduced plastic bag pollution by seventy percent.

Soundkeeper also helped pass SB5022 in 2021, a new law that allows our state to blaze a path towards Extended Producer Responsibility. SB5022 bans certain harmful products like forms of polystyrene packaging, and drives a new market by requiring post-consumer-recycled content in plastic bottles made or sold in Washington. The vast majority of trash found during cleanups is some form of plastic, as any volunteer will tell you. Both of these laws achieve our goal of stopping pollution before it reaches the Puget Sound.

**Advocacy 101:** We launched our first official advocacy education series in 2021, called Stopping Plastic Pollution. We weren't sure what kind of participation to expect, but have since engaged over 100 members and activists through a series of four virtual events.

These clean water protectors are now equipped to advocate for Puget Sound at the local and state government levels. Our growing community will join fellow Waterkeepers of Washington State at our Clean and Abundant Waters Lobby Day 2022. We'll continue to advocate for progress toward eliminating sources of plastic pollution through state-wide policy changes.





# Clean Water Litigation

When I consider Puget Soundkeeper's 2020–2021 litigation and enforcement wins, I see our values in action. We measure our success through honesty, accountability, awareness, equity, compassion, and service — and of course, cases settled, and funding directed toward mitigation and remediation. The past two years brought major victories by those standards, including an agreement with Pacific Coast Coal Company to permanently close the John Henry Coal Mine in Black Diamond. In this case, closure stopped stormwater pollution from entering the overburdened Duwamish and Green River tributaries and protected the Black Diamond community from future mining.

Puget Soundkeeper won a landmark victory in the Washington Court of Appeals requiring massive improvements to the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Permits. The state is working on a new permit through 2022, but the changes will significantly improve waterway and drinking water resource protection from industrial agriculture contamination. We were proud to partner with local environmental groups and water stewards to amplify the voices of Yakima community members who have lived with, and worked on, the CAFO problem for years.

Soundkeeper also prevailed in requiring Boeing to remediate PCBs coming from its Military Delivery Center, install advanced stormwater treatment to stop pollution from entering the Duwamish River, and contribute \$750,000 to a levee removal project creating new upstream salmon habitat. This investment amounted to the final ten percent of total project costs needed to begin levee deconstruction and wetland restoration. Salmon returned to their restored Green River habitat the same day the levee came down in October 2021. Turning violations into victories like these proves how resilient our waterways can be, if we just give them a chance. —*Katelyn Kinn, Staff Attorney*





# Community Lawyers

Puget Soundkeeper provides legal representation and advice for communities who rely on the health of Puget Sound waterways. These communities — our neighbors — are formed by people who swim, fish, and play in the Puget Sound. People whose ancestral relationship to our shared waters stretches back thousands of years, and people who only moved here last week.

We listen to, elevate, and invest in those who have been historically silenced and disproportionately impacted by water pollution. We are community lawyers, meaning we seek to maximize equity in lawyering for the communities we serve. One way in which we pursue equity is how we direct financial resources, specifically, penalties paid by polluters.

Under the Clean Water Act, most defendants in our enforcement actions can be required to make payments in lieu of penalties. Payments may look like investments in projects to redress harms caused by water violations, and restore local ecosystems. Soundkeeper recently secured a resolution with Ardagh Glass to stop water pollution from its Georgetown manufacturing plant. Ardagh was required to pay \$400,000 toward Gateway Park North revitalization, investing in the community's only Duwamish riverfront access.

We frequently partner with the professional grant makers at Rose Foundation. In 2020–2021, we directed \$2,379,000 to local organizations and initiatives for meaningful, impactful clean water projects.

*"I never thought I'd be involved in a lawsuit. But **I care about** the Puyallup River and Commencement Bay, so becoming a standing witness was an easy ask. Polluting these shared and irreplaceable resources is wrong."  
–Robb Krehbiel, Soundkeeper member*





# On the Water

"Puget Soundkeeper" is synonymous with "on the water," and has been since the organization's inception in 1984. Our patrols are vital to our growth and success. In a world of increasingly virtual engagement, bringing people to the waterfront and keeping a keen eye out for pollution must remain a central facet of Soundkeeper's mission.

No two patrols are the same. Sometimes Soundkeeper takes water quality data to provide site-specific evidence for clean water enforcement actions. Other times we look for anything indicating deeper issues, such as oil seeps or new sources of toxic contamination. We patrolled almost 300 miles of the Puget Sound in 2021, from the shipyards in Bremerton and Everett to the industrial operations of the Duwamish River.

Our boating program connects Soundkeeper to the region's vibrant maritime community by creating learning opportunities and modeling best practices. We're home to Clean Marina Washington, a 20-year-old voluntary initiative providing marinas with "best practice" tools to reduce hazardous waste discharges, prevent spills, capture sewage and garbage, and protect our aquatic resources.


Certification is optional and Soundkeeper is responsible for on-the-dock, in-person reviews of every Clean Marina's standards and management practices. Over 60 Washington marinas participate in this program as of 2021. It is the only nonprofit-run Clean Marina program in the nation.

*"I want boaters in the Pacific Northwest to explore their incredibly unique and privileged ability to connect with some of the most beautiful waterways in the world, and find a way they can **help address pollution problems.**"*

*–Blair Englebrecht, Boating Programs Manager*





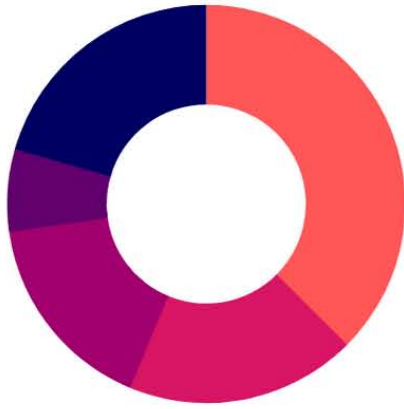
A photograph of a river scene on a misty morning. In the foreground, there are tall, dry, brown reeds or grasses. The river flows from the background towards the right. On the left bank, there are bare trees and some green bushes. On the right bank, there is a dense thicket of green bushes and trees. In the middle of the river, two people are standing near a small boat. One person is wearing a blue jacket and the other is wearing a red jacket. The background is filled with more bare trees and a thick mist or fog.

*A misty morning on Nookachamps  
Creek, one of the Skagit River's  
largest tributaries.*



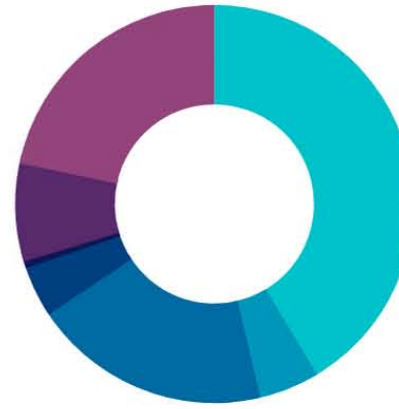
## 2020 Expenses

|             |                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| \$544,333   | <b>Soundkeeper</b>          |
| \$272,166   | <b>Outreach</b>             |
| \$239,771   | <b>Pollution Prevention</b> |
| \$97,116    | <b>Management</b>           |
| \$298,285   | <b>Fund Development</b>     |
| <hr/>       |                             |
| \$1,451,671 | <i>Total Expenses</i>       |



## 2020 Income

|                             |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Foundations</b>          | \$560,793   |
| <b>Corporations</b>         | \$66,505    |
| <b>Individuals</b>          | \$262,352   |
| <b>Gov't Grants</b>         | \$55,962    |
| <b>EarthShare</b>           | \$7,492     |
| <b>Special Events</b>       | \$107,934   |
| <b>Other &amp; Interest</b> | \$294,315   |
| <hr/>                       |             |
| <i>Total Income</i>         | \$1,355,353 |





# Puget Soundkeeper Team

Julie Angell  
*Operations Director*

Anna Bachmann  
*Healthy Watersheds Program Manager*

Alyssa Barton  
*Policy Manager*

Sean T. Dixon  
*Soundkeeper & Executive Director*

Blair Englebrecht  
*Boating Programs Manager*

Gillian Flippo  
*Stewardship Coordinator*

Katelyn Kinn  
*Staff Attorney*

Eliza Kronenberger  
*AmeriCorps Service Member*

Stefani León  
*Office Manager*

Nicole Loeffler-Gladstone  
*Communications Manager*

Teresa Nelson  
*Development Director*

Jessica Ostfeld  
*AmeriCorps Service Member*

James Roubal  
*Corporate Giving & Events Manager*

Bruce Wishart  
*Lobbyist*

---

Patricia Baird, *President*  
Alana Knaster, *Vice President*

Ned Johnson, *Treasurer*

Tom Putnam, *Secretary*

Walt Tabler, *Past President*

Ross Chambers, *Emeritus*

Glenn Bonci

Tiffany Chu

Andy Foster

Jonathan Frodge

Maraki Ketema

Peter Klopchic

Jonathan McKee

Sara Parker

Kate Pflaumer

Tiffany Sevilla

Claire Tagoe



*Interested in joining Soundkeeper's Board?  
Email [sean@pugetsoundkeeper.org](mailto:sean@pugetsoundkeeper.org), today!*





**PUGET  
SOUNDKEEPER®**

**130 Nickerson Street, Suite 107  
Seattle, WA 98109**

206.297.7002  
[pugetsoundkeeper.org](http://pugetsoundkeeper.org)

