



**PUGET
SOUNDKEEPER®**
Established in 1984

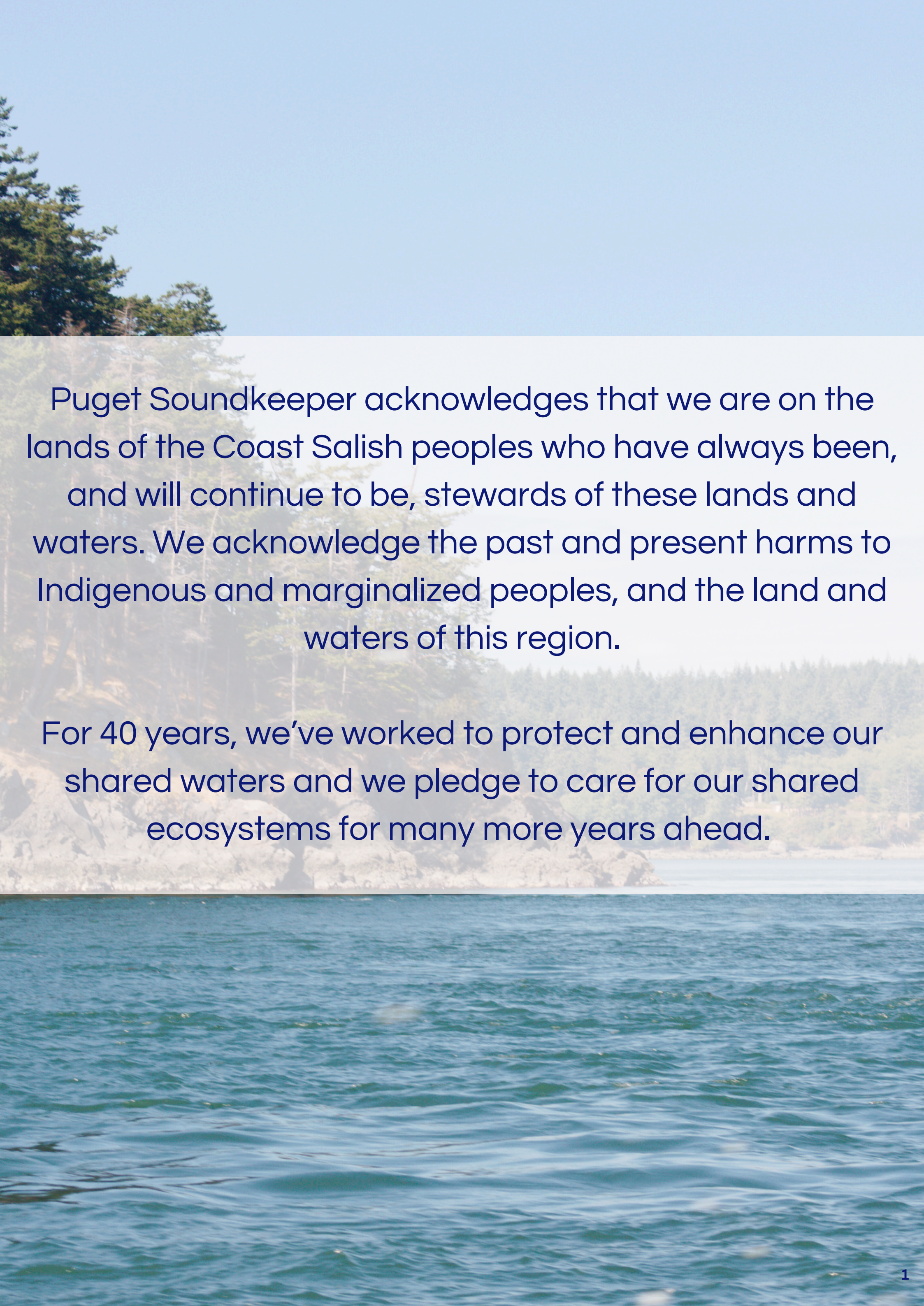
2024 International Coastal Cleanup Report



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Puget Soundkeeper acknowledges that we are on the lands of the Coast Salish peoples who have always been, and will continue to be, stewards of these lands and waters. We acknowledge the past and present harms to Indigenous and marginalized peoples, and the land and waters of this region.

For 40 years, we've worked to protect and enhance our shared waters and we pledge to care for our shared ecosystems for many more years ahead.

Marine Debris in Washington State



Marine debris is defined as human-made trash and other discarded materials that enter our waterways, either directly or indirectly. Once this material enters aquatic environments, debris can get ingested, entangle wildlife, and get lost through currents and tides, often reaching remote corners of our planet.

Marine debris ranges significantly in size. In the Puget Sound and other waterways in Washington, some primary sources of debris include, but are not limited to:

- Microplastics
- Cigarette butts
- Foam Docks (pictured)
- Creosote treated lumber (pictured)
- Abandoned crab pots
- Derelict vessels
- Tires

It is challenging to remove these items due to several reasons, including the changing weather and tides, financial costs, and the need for lots of heavy-duty equipment and trained professionals.

Despite the challenges, several groups, including local, state, and federal governments, Indigenous tribes, non-profit organizations, and community groups across the state are working to address marine debris pollution every day, and ICC events are only a small fraction of these efforts.

A Foam-tastic Mess: The Growing Crisis of Foam (and Plastic) Pollution

Foam and polystyrene is everywhere. From disposable containers to plastic foam docks, foam is used to produce several items and is one of the major pollutants in Washington State's waterways. Because the material is not easily recyclable, these materials often end up in landfills or the environment, where they break into small pieces, making it incredibly difficult to clean up.

After degrading into microplastics, they can be ingested by aquatic and terrestrial life and can be moved to other parts of the world through wind, currents, and tides.

Luckily, Washington State has been taking political and legal action to address foam and plastic pollution. For example, in the last two years, the state has banned plastic foam food ware, single-use foam coolers, and packing peanuts, with the goal of reducing the amount of plastic found in the environment.

While this is still a win for the environment, there is still lots of action needed to be taken to disrupt the production of plastic for other uses.

What is International Coastal Cleanup (ICC)?

Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) is the largest volunteer project done in service to our oceans, bringing together organizations and individuals from around the globe. Volunteers remove trash from the waterways worldwide, document debris sources, and promote behavior and policy changes to prevent marine litter in the first place.

At each ICC cleanup, participants collect data on the amount and types of debris they find using data cards or the Ocean Conservancy's Clean Swell app. After analyzing the debris collected, the data can be used to inform and draft local, regional, or international legislation, policies, and other solutions to protect our waterways.

Puget Soundkeeper is the regional coordinator for ICC cleanups across the Puget Sound. This report details the work of several community partners who participated in the Puget Sound ICC effort from August through December of 2024.



Making History: Turning the Tide at Alki Beach

On September 21, 2024, Alki Beach was buzzing with energy as nearly 200 volunteers came together for Ocean Conservancy’s first-ever Seattle-based flagship International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) event, in partnership with Puget Soundkeeper. In just a few hours, volunteers collected 100+ pounds of trash, making a splash in the fight against marine pollution!

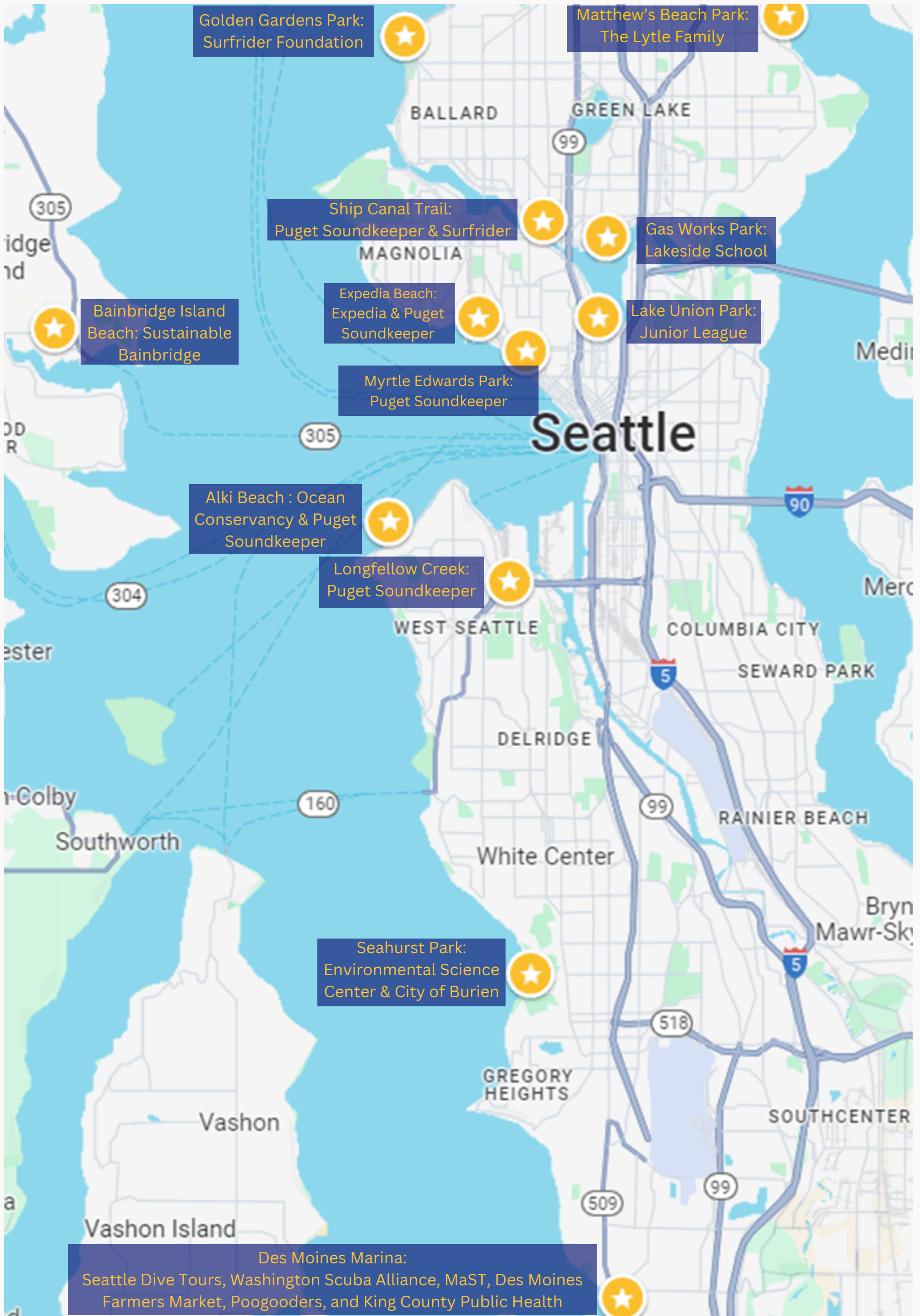


But this wasn’t just a Seattle effort - it was part of a massive, global movement. Since the first ICC cleanup in 1986, 18+ million volunteers have joined cleanup efforts, removing 385+ million pounds of trash from beaches and waterways globally.



Central Puget Sound ICC Cleanup Map

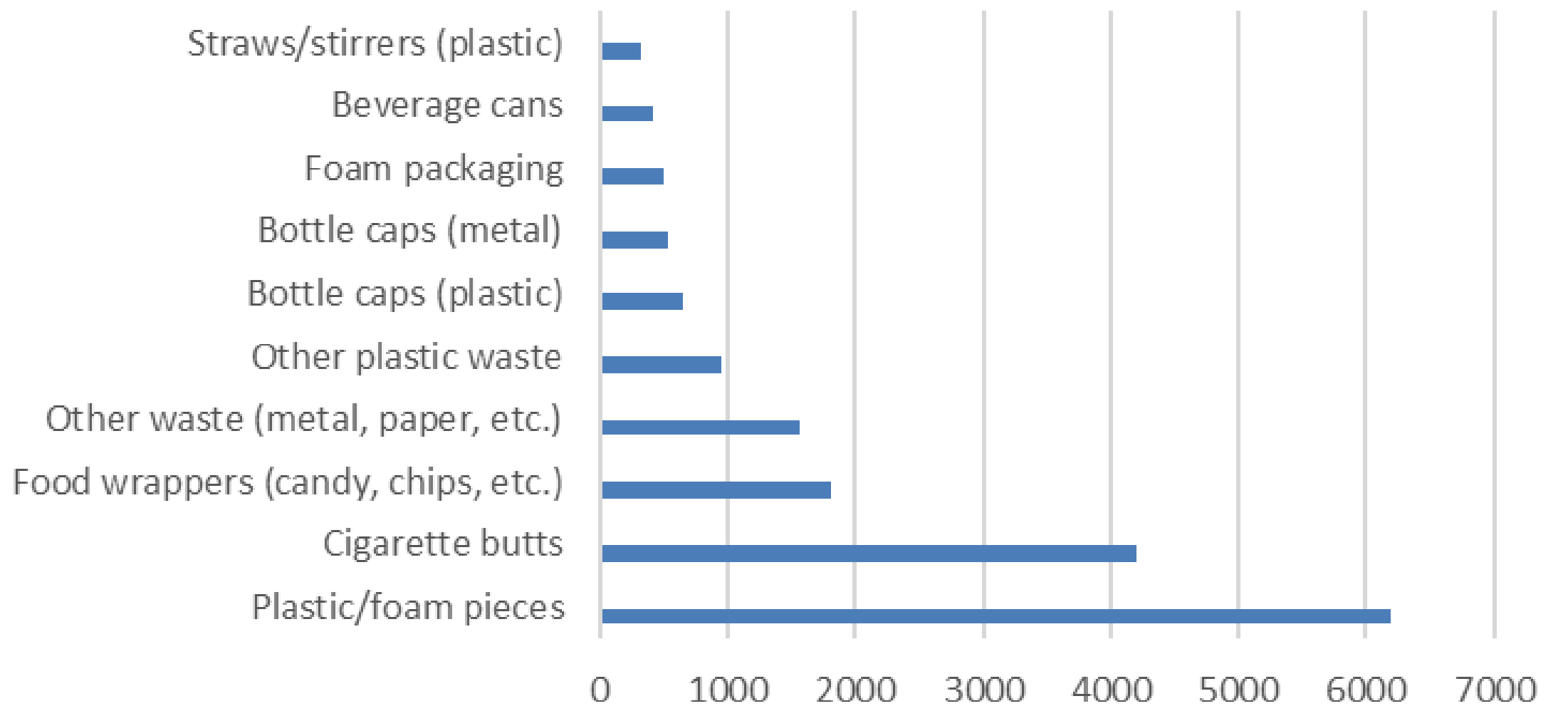
**** Not visible on map - Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve: RE Sources/ North Sound Waterkeeper (Bellingham, WA)**



2024 ICC Statistics (Central Puget Sound)



Top 10 Marine Debris Found in Central Puget Sound



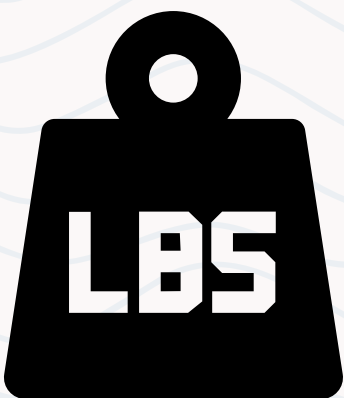
20,585
Pieces of Trash
Collected



741
Volunteers

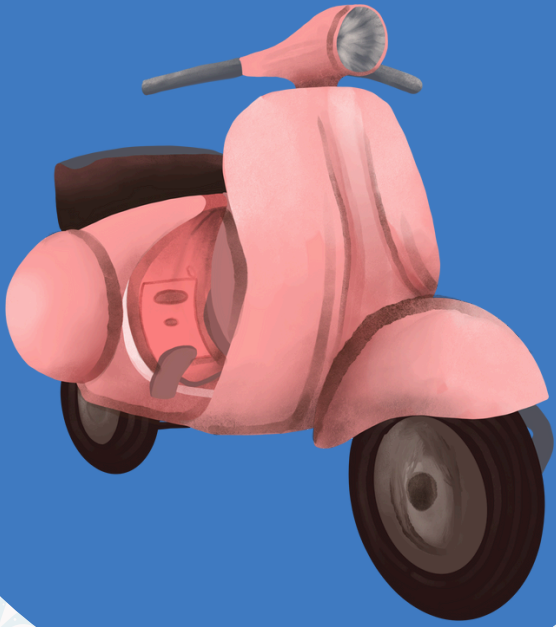


2,608.51
Pounds of
Debris



Trash or Treasure? Unusual Finds from our ICC cleanups!

Abandoned Vespa



Screwdriver



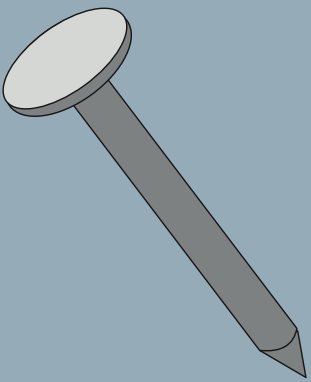
Toothbrushes



Entangled Goose



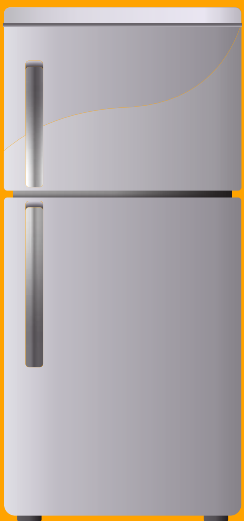
Nails



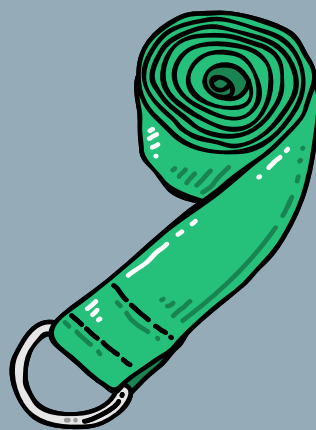
Footwear



Refrigerators



Strapping Bands



Tiny Terrors: Microplastics are Everywhere!

Microplastics are defined as plastic materials smaller than 5 millimeters (mm). These can come from synthetic clothing, plastic silverware, plastic bags, and many more everyday items that don't break down but just break into smaller pieces. Despite the initial pros of plastic, the cons are far more substantial for both the natural environment and human health. Due to the challenges of recycling plastic, it typically ends up in landfills or enters our waterways. In the wild, plastic breaks up and is consumed by aquatic and terrestrial animals - and even finds its way into our body!

Microplastic pollution is now found in every ecosystem on Earth. Microplastics have even been found in the air we breathe and the food we eat, and even in our blood!



How to Report Pollution in the Puget Sound

Call the Puget Soundkeeper Pollution Hotline: **1-800-42PUGET**

You can also email us at **hotline@pugetsoundkeeper.org**

Statewide:

- Derelict Fishing Gear (Dept. of Fish & Wildlife): (855) 542-3935
- Derelict Boats (Dept. of Natural Resources): (360) 902-2628
- Navigation Hazards (US Coast Guard Puget Sound): (206) 217-6200

Seattle, King County:

- Seattle Public Utilities: (206) 386-1800
- Seattle Harbor Patrol: (206) 684-4071
- King County Illegal Dumping Hotline: (206) 477-4811
- King County Stormwater Services: (206) 477-4811

Other:

- Snohomish County Water Pollution Hotline: (425) 388-6481
- Kitsap County Water Pollution Hotline: (360) 337-5777
- Pierce County Public Works, Discharge to Streets: (253) 798-4274

Contact your Local Waterkeeper!

Puget Soundkeeper Alliance is not the only Waterkeeper organization advocating for clean water around the Puget Sound! You can also reach out to the organizations below if you're observing pollution in the north or south Sound!

- RE Sources, North Sound Waterkeeper (Bellingham, WA)
 - Tip Line: (360) 220-0556
 - Email: kirstenm@re-sources.org
- Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team (Olympia, WA)
 - Tip Line: (360) 358-1935
 - Email: olydert@gmail.com



Interested in Supporting our Efforts in 2025?



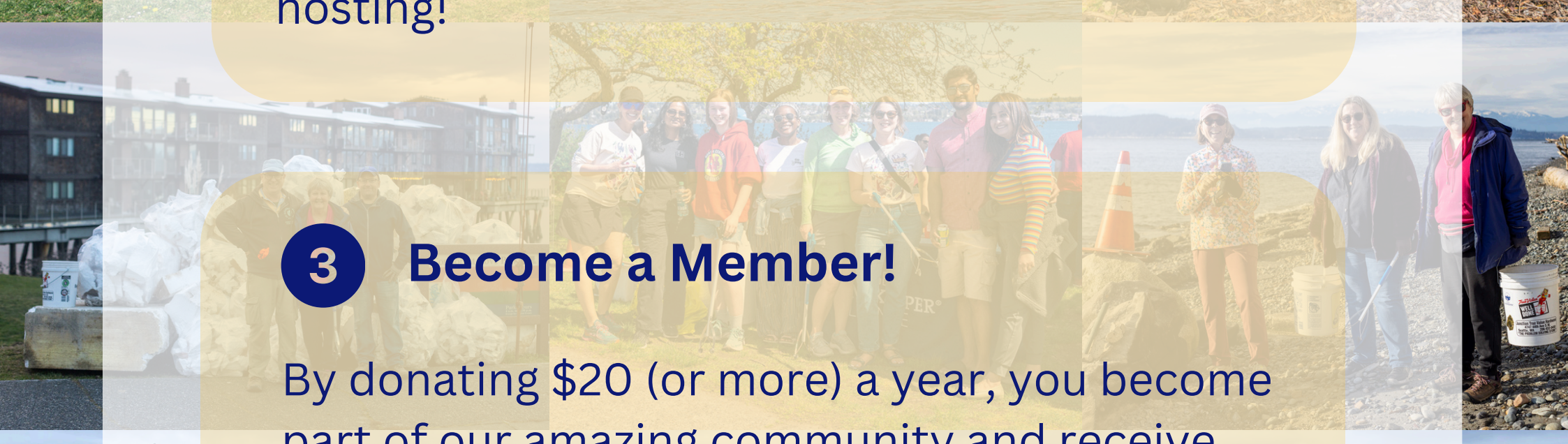
1 Host your own ICC event!

Email Tanya Balaji, Puget Soundkeeper's Education and Stewardship Manager, to learn more about how to host your own ICC cleanup!



2 Join an ICC event near you!

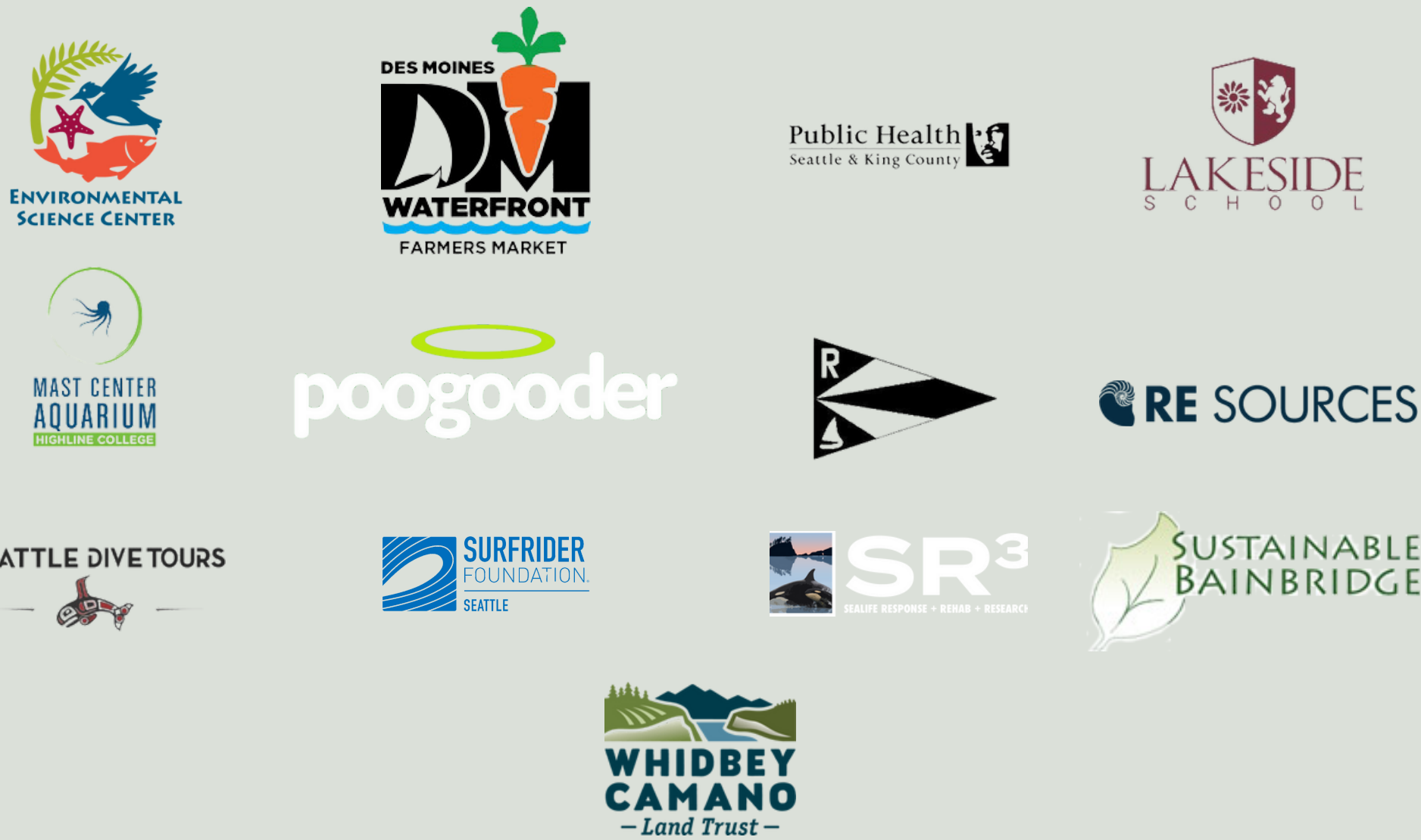
Keep an eye out on our ICC events page for more information about ICC events that Puget Soundkeeper and are community partners are hosting!



3 Become a Member!

By donating \$20 (or more) a year, you become part of our amazing community and receive exclusive perks, all while supporting our mission. Learn more about becoming a member here.

2024 International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Supporting Partners



Special thanks to the **Ocean Conservancy** for leading the ICC movement



Photo Credit: Katy Kachmarik, Environmental Science Center (Burien)



Photo Credit: Anne Hammond, Renton Sailing Center (Renton)

Photo Credit: Katy Kachmarik, Environmental Science Center (Burien)