

2021-2023 Strategic Plan



Vision

Our innovative partnerships protect and sustain healthy land, air, and water in harmony with a strong economy.

Mission

To protect, preserve, and enhance Washington's environment for current and future generations.

Values

- Environmental stewardship
- Environmental justice
- Public health, safety, and welfare
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Problem solving and innovation
- Continuous improvement
- Collaborative and respectful relations

Goals



Support and engage our communities, customers, and employees



Reduce and prepare for climate impacts



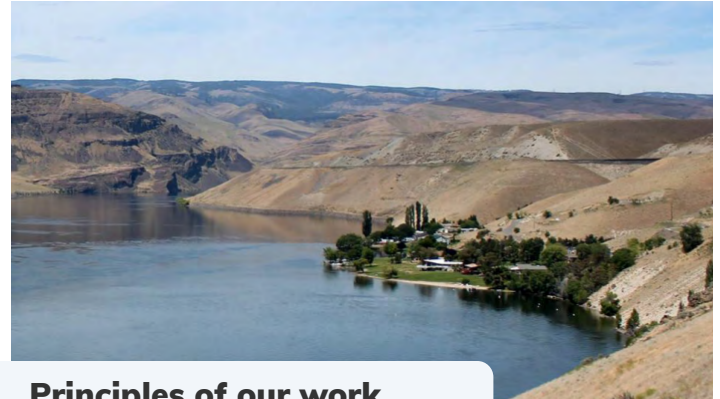
Prevent and reduce toxic threats and pollution



Protect and manage our state's waters



Protect and restore Puget Sound



Principles of our work

Work in partnerships with communities, businesses, interest groups, and local, state, and federal agencies to protect the environment.

Engage in meaningful tribal consultation.

Communicate clearly, strengthen engagement, and eliminate public involvement barriers.

Strive to eliminate environmental and health disparities by prioritizing communities with environmental justice considerations.

Support our commitment to sustainability by understanding the results of our actions and acknowledging that people, economies, and all life depend on healthy, functioning ecosystems.

Award and manage grants and loans as financial partners to maximize environmental, public health, and economic benefits in local communities.

Recognize and value how every employee's work and expertise contributes to our mission.

Create and support opportunities for integrated cross-program work (One Ecology).

Make transparent, defensible decisions using accurate and reliable data with quality science.



GOAL 1

Support and engage our communities, customers, and employees

We strive to equitably deliver our services and resources, embrace innovation and new technology, and work to continually improve our performance. We foster a diverse, well-trained, and friendly workforce that operates with excellence and professionalism. Our leadership teams are committed to all employees, modeling our commitment to communities, customers, and one another.

Strategies

1.1 Integrate Title VI (Civil Rights Act) nondiscrimination compliance, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, and support environmental justice work throughout Ecology's programs and activities to ensure equitable service delivery.

1.2 Engage proactively with our customers and communities to seek and use feedback to improve our work and assess meaningful involvement.

1.3 Foster a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and respectful workplace by:

- Seeking qualified candidates for employment.
- Paying equitably.
- Evaluating and reducing barriers to work-related opportunities advancement throughout Ecology.
- Providing a work environment that promotes appreciation, understanding, and respect for individual differences.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines **environmental justice** as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."

For Ecology this means:

- Evaluating and implementing service equity in our programs and decision-making, assessing and mitigating impacts to overburdened and underserved populations, and creating accountability measures to eliminate environmental and health disparities.
- Being mindful of inclusivity and access, planning for and engaging in meaningful public involvement, and ensuring potentially affected populations have an opportunity to learn about, participate in, and influence decisions and actions.

We view diversity, equity, inclusion, and respect through a broad lens including:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Class
- Age
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Immigration status
- Military background
- Language
- Education
- Life experience
- Physical disability
- Neurodiversity
- Intersectional identities

For Ecology this means a workplace that embraces humble inquiry, courage, cultural humility, and caring. A workplace where individuals are heard and honored in meaningful, substantive ways and guaranteed opportunity for advancement, access, and fair treatment. These principles are foundational to Ecology's work and guide our actions with purpose and intention.



GOAL 1 CONTINUED

Support and engage our communities, customers, and employees

Strategies (continued)

1.4 Commit our leaders and employees to:

- Initiating change.
- Actively listening.
- Fostering inclusive collaboration.
- Communicating frequently, consistently, and transparently.
- Encouraging the sharing of expertise.
- Providing opportunities for growth and development in our employees.

1.5 Invest in our employees by:

- Hiring and retaining talented and diverse people.
- Recognizing their expertise.
- Sharing knowledge.
- Building their skills and leadership capacity through learning opportunities.
- Using effective mentoring and coaching.
- Integrating their feedback to improve our work.



1.6 Leverage technology solutions that support a modern, mobile workforce to allow us to be more adaptive and responsive to communities, customers, and employees.

1.7 Measure Ecology's success through a performance management system based on our goals and measures, using continuous improvement and risk management.

1.8 Lead proactive, innovative communications to share Ecology's work and why it matters with our diverse audiences.

1.9 Manage Ecology's financial resources responsibly and ensure our long-term financial health so we have funding to accomplish our mission.

1.10 Provide secure and sustainable infrastructure, access to public records, and operational support to help Ecology conduct our work to protect, preserve, and enhance the environment.



GOAL 2

Reduce and prepare for climate impacts

Ecology is preparing for the future by understanding and reducing the effects of climate change on our communities, environment, and economy. We will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote community resilience, and prevent and remediate negative impacts with an emphasis on historically underserved and overburdened communities.

Strategies

- 2.1 Understand and share information about climate change and the associated impacts, especially with communities that are disproportionately affected.
- 2.2 Reduce and prevent greenhouse gas emissions, keeping in mind communities that are most impacted by climate change.
- 2.3 Support communities and partners — prioritizing the most vulnerable and sensitive populations — in preparing for and adjusting to climate change.
- 2.4 Consider climate impacts throughout our decision-making while ensuring meaningful engagement with communities with environmental justice considerations.





GOAL 3

Prevent and reduce toxic threats and pollution

We work to prevent and reduce toxic threats and pollution and manage legacy contamination. We make strategic efforts to eliminate the disproportionate impacts on communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income populations across Washington.



Toxic threats and pollution come from many sources, including consumer products and business processes, and can end up as pollution in the air, water, and land, or accumulate in our bodies.

Inappropriate management or disposal of chemicals or waste can result in long-lasting contamination and economic, social, and environmental impacts. To protect against ongoing toxic threats and pollution, we:

- Prevent and reduce use in the first place.
- Ensure recycling/reuse of appropriate materials.
- Regulate final disposal.
- Manage cleanup.

Strategies

3.1 Prevent toxic substances from becoming threats or pollution by:

- Identifying the most harmful chemicals or products.
- Measuring and understanding their impacts to the environment, public health, and communities with environmental justice concerns.
- Reducing their use by promoting safer alternatives and implementing restrictions or other requirements.

3.2 Prevent and reduce the release and impacts of toxic chemicals and pollution by:

- Providing technical assistance.
- Promoting proper management.
- Gathering data.
- Implementing regulatory, permitting, and compliance work.

We prioritize this work in overburdened and underserved communities.

3.3 Ensure that pollution and contaminated sites, including legacy environmental contamination, are managed and cleaned up while taking into consideration environmental justice, environmental and human health, community needs, and economic vitality.



GOAL 4

Protect and manage our state's waters

We provide a coordinated and collaborative approach to protecting and managing water. Ecology's work ensures Washington has high-quality water supplies that support thriving ecological systems, as well as meet current and future tribal, agricultural, and community needs.



Strategies

- 4.1 Develop water resource solutions that consider legal and historical context, impacts of climate change, population growth, impacts to fish, and other resource constraints while balancing the needs of people and communities, contributing to a robust economy, and protecting the natural environment.
- 4.2 Use innovative solutions that align with regulatory requirements and environmental justice considerations to:
 - Address long-term water project investment, monitoring, and funding needs.
 - Develop and implement water quality and sediment cleanup plans.
 - Write and enforce permits.
 - Encourage the use of reclaimed water.
 - Restore and manage floodplains.
- 4.3 Support local government, communities, and businesses, while prioritizing underserved and underinvested areas or populations, to reduce the risks of surface and groundwater pollution by providing:
 - Waste, pollution, and toxics related technical assistance.
 - Product replacement opportunities.



GOAL 5

Protect and restore Puget Sound

Puget Sound requires our continued attention. We are building partnerships and making investments to restore, protect, and preserve the health of Puget Sound, now and for future generations. We commit to partnering and meaningful engagement with tribal governments and our customers, including communities with environmental justice considerations.

Strategies

- 5.1 Monitor Puget Sound health and restoration to address environmental impacts, including those that affect tribes and underserved communities.
- 5.2 Accelerate innovative solutions for toxic reduction strategies to protect orca, salmon, and shellfish in Puget Sound waters, working in partnership with communities and consulting with tribes.
- 5.3 Support the recovery of salmon and shellfish and improve water quality by managing stormwater, reducing excess nutrients, preventing pollution, and cleaning up contaminated sites, while prioritizing environmentally overburdened and underinvested communities.
- 5.4 Prevent oil spills and enhance our oil and hazardous materials response capacity, focusing on areas underserved and at highest environmental risk.



ADA Accessibility

The Department of Ecology is committed to providing people with disabilities access to information and services by meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Washington State Policy #188.



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6831 or email at ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov. For Washington Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341. Visit [Ecology's website](#) for more information.