

Workshop Activity: Marine Vegetation Research Agenda

As part of the Marine Vegetation Implementation Strategy, University of Washington [Puget Sound Institute](#) (PSI) and the [Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead](#) are curating a regional list of information gaps about marine vegetation. This list is expected to help inform regional research activities and funding decisions. We have sourced 58 potential information gaps from four regional kelp and eelgrass recovery plans and associated documents, other regional reports, and input from an expert review group (document sources are listed on pages 3-5). We'd appreciate your help prioritizing among these research questions/information gaps, so that we can identify top research priorities for marine vegetation in Puget Sound!

Instructions

- 1) **Identify Priorities**: Please vote for the 10 research questions/information gaps that should be addressed first in order to advance the recovery of marine vegetation in Puget Sound.

Considerations include:

- a. The question/gap represents a barrier to recovery (i.e., we do not know what to do until this question is addressed)
- b. The question/gap represents a barrier to planning (i.e., knowing the answer would help sequence and/or prioritize recovery actions)

Cast your votes by selecting the check-box next to your top ten in the online form **by May 1, 2025**.

- 2) **Additional feedback**: In the comment box provided in the online form, please provide any of the following input:

- **Suggested edits**: Could any of the research questions/information gaps be more specific? Should any be edited to clarify **how a lack of knowledge prevents action to manage marine vegetation**?
- **Existing knowledge**: Is there already some information available about any of these questions/gaps? If possible, please share any useful information sources.
- **Additional questions/gaps**: Are there any research questions/information gaps missing from the list? Remember, these should be barriers to action.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Puget Sound Institute doing this activity?

PSI receives funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Puget Sound Partnership to provide technical support for the Puget Sound National Estuary Program. During

the development of Implementation Strategies, we work with Strategic Initiative Leads, technical experts, and practitioners to identify and prioritize information gaps that impact the ability to plan and/or implement recovery activities. Program partners recognized there was a need to organize and resolve these groups of research needs (“uncertainties”) in an intentional and systematic way, so we developed a [Grand Uncertainties Matrix](#) (the “GUM”) as a repository to catalog uncertainties, capture prioritization information, and track related research activities. You can read more about this work on PSI’s [website](#).

What will this list be used for?

Once the list is finalized, it will be included in the Marine Vegetation Implementation Strategy and added to the GUM, used to direct some PSI research activities, and help inform future Puget Sound National Estuary Program request for proposals. Other researchers may also find that referencing a regionally vetted list of research needs may bolster grant applications.

Where did the research questions/information gaps come from?

PSI reviewed existing kelp and eelgrass recovery plans from Puget Sound as well as other regional documents and compiled relevant research questions to develop this list. Major sources were the 2015 eelgrass recovery strategy (Washington Department of Natural Resources, 2015), and the 2020 kelp plan (Calloway et al., 2020) and its 2023 update (Whitty & Oster, 2023). The full bibliography is provided on pages 3-5. After initial review and consolidation of the research questions, an expert review group provided feedback on a draft list and added more research questions. PSI specifically sought additional human dimensions questions from this expert group since these were lacking in the original list. PSI edited and consolidated research questions in response to expert feedback, to prepare questions for prioritization.

Who do I contact if I want to follow up about this activity?

You can reach out to Aimee Kinney <aimeek@uw.edu> or Sandra Dorning <sdorning@uw.edu> if you have questions about the marine vegetation research agenda, and Sandra Dorning if you have questions about the GUM.

The University of Washington is committed to providing access and accommodation in its services, programs, and activities. To make a request connected to a disability or health condition contact Sandra Dorning at 253.254.7030 ext. 8014 or sdorning@uw.edu as soon as possible.

Sources of Research Questions/Information Gaps

Beheshti, K. and Ward, M. (2021). *Eelgrass restoration on the U.S. West Coast: A comprehensive assessment of restoration techniques and their outcomes*. Prepared for the Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership.

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National Marine Fisheries Service. (2017). *Rockfish Recovery Plan: Puget Sound/Georgia Basin yelloweye rockfish (Sebastes ruberrimus) and bocaccio (Sebastes paucispinis)*. National Marine Fisheries Service. Seattle, WA.

<https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/16866>

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