

THE PUGET SOUND ECOSYSTEM: MILESTONES OF TWO+ CENTURIES OF CHANGE

- Pre-1790 Tribes develop religious, economic and cultural societies oriented around salmon, cedar and other indigenous natural resources.
- 1792 Vancouver sails into Puget Sound. Human population estimated at 50,000
- 1810-40 Fur trapping depletes beaver populations, a keystone species of habitat formation.

Small pox and other diseases wipe out three-quarters of the native human population.
- 1847-64 California gold rush increases demand for Olympia oysters and other seafood.

Small, local mills are constructed to supply building materials for settlers, and expand to meet the demand for the gold rush and ship building. Easy timber along marine and lower river shorelines is harvested first.
- 1854-5 Tribal treaties signed.
- 1863 First dike constructed in Skagit County on LaConner flats for development of agricultural land.
- 1874 Pacific oysters introduced due to depletion of Native Olympia oyster.
- 1877 Puget Sound's first fish cannery built at Mukilteo.
- 1883 William Renton notes that "timber contiguous to the Sound is nearly exhausted"
- 1883-91 Transcontinental railroad connections to Tacoma, Seattle and other cities completed, increasing the ability to market timber. Railroads are constructed along Puget Sound shorelines and river basins, and to access timber.
- 1889 Washington becomes a state.
- 1896 First Puget Sound salmon hatchery constructed on the Baker River
- 1896 First agricultural irrigation system in the Dungeness valley.
1900 Port Blakely in Kitsap County is the location of the largest lumber mills in the world. Technological advances such as the band saw and steam donkey boost lumber production.
- 1900-10 Seattle population expands from 81,000 to 237,000 due to Alaska Gold Rush.



- 1900-20 Several major dams constructed on the Cedar, Nisqually, White, Elwha and other rivers for urban water supplies and to power mills.
- White, Cedar and Black rivers are re-routed.
- 1903-11 Peak period of the Denny Regrade: 16 million cubic yards were removed from Seattle hills, mostly by water blasting. About half of the spoils were deposited in the tideflats, forming Harbor Island.
- 1906 Puyallup levees constructed.
- 1913 Peak cannery pack in Puget Sound with 2,583,463 cases of Pacific salmon.
- 1913-27 Puget Sound salmon hatcheries import eggs from the Columbia River.
- 1916 Ballard Locks completed, dropping level of Lake Washington by approximately 9 feet and eliminating substantial marsh habitat.
- 1916-18 Puget Sound Naval Shipyard undertakes major production of military ships during WWI.
- 1917 Boeing Airplane Company is incorporated.
- 1920s Highway 101 constructed along the west side of Hood Canal, crossing all major river deltas.
- Dams built on Skokomish and Skagit systems.
- 1924 Manila clams introduced with shipments of Pacific oyster seed.
- 1926 All time peak of Washington lumber production at 7.5 billion board feet.
- 1927-57 One hatchery in the Green River is the source for 67.7% of Chinook releases throughout Puget Sound.
- 1941 *Spartina alterniflora* intentionally planted in Padilla Bay by a hunting club.
- 1942-5 Puget Sound is major center for manufacturing and military staging during WWII.
- 1945-60 Major expansion of transportation infrastructure in Puget Sound including Interstate 5
- 1950s Recreational fisheries expand following World War II. Recreational catch of Chinook in Puget Sound in 1957 estimated at 238,000.
- Cold war era boosts Boeing production.
- First oil refinery built on Puget Sound.
- According to a federal report, Puget Sound is the sixth most polluted area in the country.



- 1960s Flooding leads to expansion of levee systems along Cedar, Sammamish and other rivers.
- 1962 Howard Hanson Dam constructed – Green R.
- 1968 Sewage effluent entering Lake Washington, once estimated at 20 million gallons per day, is reduced to zero.
- 1970s Peak contaminant levels in Puget Sound sediments. The manufacture of PCBs and several other toxic contaminants are banned nationally.
- Construction of numerous bulkheads, docks, piers and revetments along central Puget Sound basin.
- 1971 Shoreline Management Act is approved.
- 1974 Boldt Decision determines that treaty tribes in WA reserved the right to harvest up to 50% of the salmon catch.
- 1977 Seattle is the second busiest container port in the U.S. and sixth busiest in the world.
- 1981 Industry giant IBM selects tiny Microsoft's MS-DOS as the operating system for their new personal computer.
- 1985 Pacific Salmon Treaty signed with Canada.
- 1999 Endangered Species Act listing of Puget Sound Chinook is the first major listing affecting an urban area. Draft recovery plan completed in 2005.
- 2000 Human population of Puget Sound estimated at 3.8 million
- 2005 Southern resident orca population listed as endangered.
- 2020 An additional 1.4 residents expected, bringing the combined total of Puget Sound and the Georgia Basin to over 7 million.

