



Protecting roadsides

Road Maintenance – WSDOT’s Road Maintenance Endangered Species Act Guidelines provide a set of road maintenance policies and practices that meet the dual goals of contributing to the conservation of Endangered Species Act listed species, while meeting critical roadway safety and maintenance needs. The guidelines are the product of a collaborative effort between WSDOT, local government agencies, two federal agencies and other interested parties.

Vegetation management - WSDOT cares for and controls plants along the highway. WSDOT uses a combination of mechanical, manual, biological and chemical methods to control vegetation along roadsides. If managed properly, roadside vegetation can become self-sustaining over time and require less maintenance. WSDOT has significantly reduced herbicide use and maintenance costs through the use of the following vegetation management tools:

- Mowing and trimming
- Selectively using herbicides
- Release of weed-eating insects
- Improving Soils
- Planting native plants

Roadside restoration – If a transportation project disturbs roadside areas, WSDOT restores the landscape according to the characteristics of the surrounding area. For example, in an urban setting, we may restore the roadside to have a park-like appearance, whereas in a forested area, we would plant vegetation to blend in with the natural growth. Using native plants in roadside restoration reduces maintenance requirements and costs over the long term. Once established, native plant communities reduce soil erosion and will out-compete many weeds and undesirable plants.

For more information on our environmental practices, check our website: www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment

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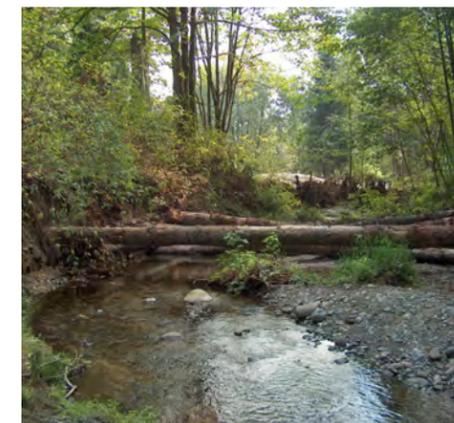
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How does WSDOT protect the environment?



WSDOT focuses on protecting the environment and healthy communities as we operate and improve Washington’s transportation system. Our state’s economic vitality and renowned livability depend on reliable, responsible and sustainable transportation.

WSDOT has good news to tell—Environmental protection and enhancement is built into our projects and operations!

When improving an existing stretch of highway we correct barriers to fish passage, control erosion and manage stormwater. When designing our projects we first try to avoid sensitive resources. We avoid or limit impacts to the natural environment especially wetlands, streams and rivers adjacent to state highways.

WSDOT is producing environmental benefits from the transportation dollar investments.

In the past few years, as a result of the 2003-05 gas tax, WSDOT has invested \$16.3 billion in our state’s transportation system. Today’s highway and ferry terminal construction projects integrate environmental protections into project design, construction and operation.

Protecting our waters



Wetlands - WSDOT avoids and minimizes impacts to wetlands whenever possible, and provides replacement wetlands when it is not. Since 1988, WSDOT has built 194 replacement wetlands totaling 942 acres. The sites are monitored and managed to ensure they become self-sustaining, and successfully replace lost wetland functions. Summer college interns help WSDOT biologists monitor over 100 sites each year. WSDOT also buys wetland credits from mitigation banks and in-lieu fee programs when they are more cost effective.

Fish passage – WSDOT and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife began a program in 1991 to remove barriers to fish, such as highway culverts. Since then, we have evaluated all the culverts on the state highway system to identify which ones are barriers, and to prioritize the corrections that have the most benefit to fish.

Since 1991, WSDOT has completed 269 fish barrier removal projects opening up over 904 miles of potential upstream habitat for fish.

Stormwater management – Statewide, WSDOT has approximately 40,000 acres of paved surfaces, which include roadway surfaces, park and ride lots, ferry terminals, safety rest areas and maintenance yards. Stormwater running off these surfaces, if left untreated, can pick up pollutants such as oil, fertilizers, pesticides, soil and trash and carry them to rivers and streams.

WSDOT uses a variety of methods to manage stormwater. We have constructed over 2,000 stormwater treatment facilities to remove pollutants and control high flows to reduce downstream impacts.

WSDOT is taking ambitious steps to treat more runoff than ever before. And, we will be testing runoff quality to evaluate how well treatment is working.

Erosion control during construction – When constructing transportation facilities disturbs soils, crews prevent erosion at these sites by installing erosion control blankets, planting grass, building ponds and other measures. Construction areas that have a high potential for erosion due to the project’s size, steepness, soil type or proximity to waterways are regularly inspected by WSDOT. In addition to regular inspections during construction, we assess sites in the fall that have a high erosion potential to make sure they are ready for the rainy season.

For more information: www.wsdot.wa.gov/accountability/GrayNotebook/SubjectIndex

Our ferry system is currently working on a variety of projects designed to reduce pollution and improve the environment. Washington State Ferries (WSF), part of WSDOT since 1977, is the largest ferry system in the United States, serving eight counties within Washington and the Province of British Columbia in Canada. Counties served include Pierce, King, Snohomish, Kitsap, Skagit, Island, San Juan, and Jefferson Counties. Twenty eight vessels serve 10 routes with 20 terminals. Pollution prevention is a part of everyday operations of the ferries – especially around fueling. The WSF is our state’s largest user of low sulfur diesel. WSF is also the state’s largest consumer of biodiesel and is looking at additional ways to improve water and air quality.

New Designs for Ferry Terminals

Some examples of ferry terminal improvements:

- Replacing creosote piles
- Replanting eelgrass
- Improving the nearshore habitat
- Providing better places for salmon – improving wetlands and changing dock design to let light shine through
- Environmentally friendly/green design for stormwater management and energy conservation



Protecting communities

Addressing climate change - In Washington, transportation accounts for nearly half of the total greenhouse gas emissions, including emissions from cars, trucks, planes, and ships.

WSDOT is working to reduce greenhouse gases by:

- reducing vehicle miles traveled
- supporting improved vehicle technology
- improving the efficiency of the transportation system

WSDOT supports transit, carpools and many other commuter choices like telework and passenger rail. We also work to reduce truck idling, use cleaner fuels, and promote high capacity transit. View www.wsdot.wa.gov/Environment/ClimateChange for details.

WSDOT used the Pacific NW climate forecast to assess where the system is resilient, and where it is most likely at risk. We are working with partners to improve our “climate readiness” and prepare for extreme weather events: www.wsdot.wa.gov/SustainableTransportation/adapting.htm

Involving communities - Our plans and projects reach out to the public and to those with limited English proficiency to ensure everyone has an opportunity to engage in problem solving and that those affected are well aware of potential changes. As we evaluate new projects, WSDOT considers community human health issues such as air and water quality, noise levels, and many other topics.

Aiding wildlife migration – Wildlife need to move across the landscape and highway corridors for seasonal migration, access to food and to establish new territories as the young mature. WSDOT works with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to identify wildlife corridors where there is significant wildlife movement. These corridors are considered during transportation planning, project development and maintenance operations. As an example, WSDOT is designing wildlife crossings for I-90 near Hyak.

Reducing collisions - Approximately 3,000 collisions occur yearly with deer and elk on state highways. These collisions can result in serious injuries and fatalities to motorists. WSDOT tracks information on wildlife-vehicle collisions. Depending on the data we may put up signs or fencing – or we work with wildlife agencies to find long-term solutions.

Protecting cultural resources - WSDOT strives to protect cultural resources. When a project has potential to affect cultural resources, we consult with Indian tribes, local, state and federal agencies, and others to assess and minimize impacts, and correct for any unavoidable impacts. Cultural resources include:

- archaeological sites,
- historic structures (such as buildings and bridges) and
- areas of traditional cultural importance to tribes or other communities.

Did you know?

WSDOT is responsible for more than 20,000 lane-miles of roadway and nearly 3,000 bridges. We are building environmental sustainability into our work of maintaining and improving the state’s transportation system.

