PUGET SOUND
National Estuary Program

PUGET SOUND WATERSHED CHARACTERIZATION (PSWC) 2.0
The PSWC provides a decision support tool that helps local and tribal governments, and NGOs make better watershed land use decisions. This project will review and update current PSWC broad-scale indices of watershed processes, initiate development of additional complimentary finer-scale characterization indices and tools, and develop a climate change vulnerability module.

What we’re doing
Over the next 9 months, PSWC staff will be working with a team of local government planners and watershed scientists to test and evaluate new finer scale indices that measure the hydrologic health of watersheds. In addition, this team will also update the current broad scale tools with the latest data layers for stream systems, floodplains and watershed boundaries and review and improve indices calculation methods.

WHY IS THIS ISSUE IMPORTANT
These indices have been recognized by many local governments and regional planners as a useful tool in making better land use and restoration decisions that are watershed based. Increasing the use of watershed based decision support tools by planners will improve the effectiveness of efforts to protect and restore Puget Sound ecosystems.

WHAT YOU CAN DO
To develop an understanding of how watershed based information may help inform and improve local planning decisions, visit the PSWC webpage. This webpage provides examples of watershed based planning efforts in Puget Sound in addition to an interactive map that allows the user to view results of the PCWC indices for water flow and water quality assessments.

https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/coastalatlas/wc/landingpage.html

WA State Department of Ecology
The PSWC staff has worked with numerous local and tribal governments and NGOs to successfully address local planning issues. This has included watershed based stormwater plans in the City of Mukilteo, a subarea plan for the City of Gorst, the Blackjack Creek Protection and Restoration Plan for the Squamish Tribe and City of Duvall Comprehensive Plan Update.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Colin Hume, DOE Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program colin.hume@ecy.wa.gov, 425–649–7139