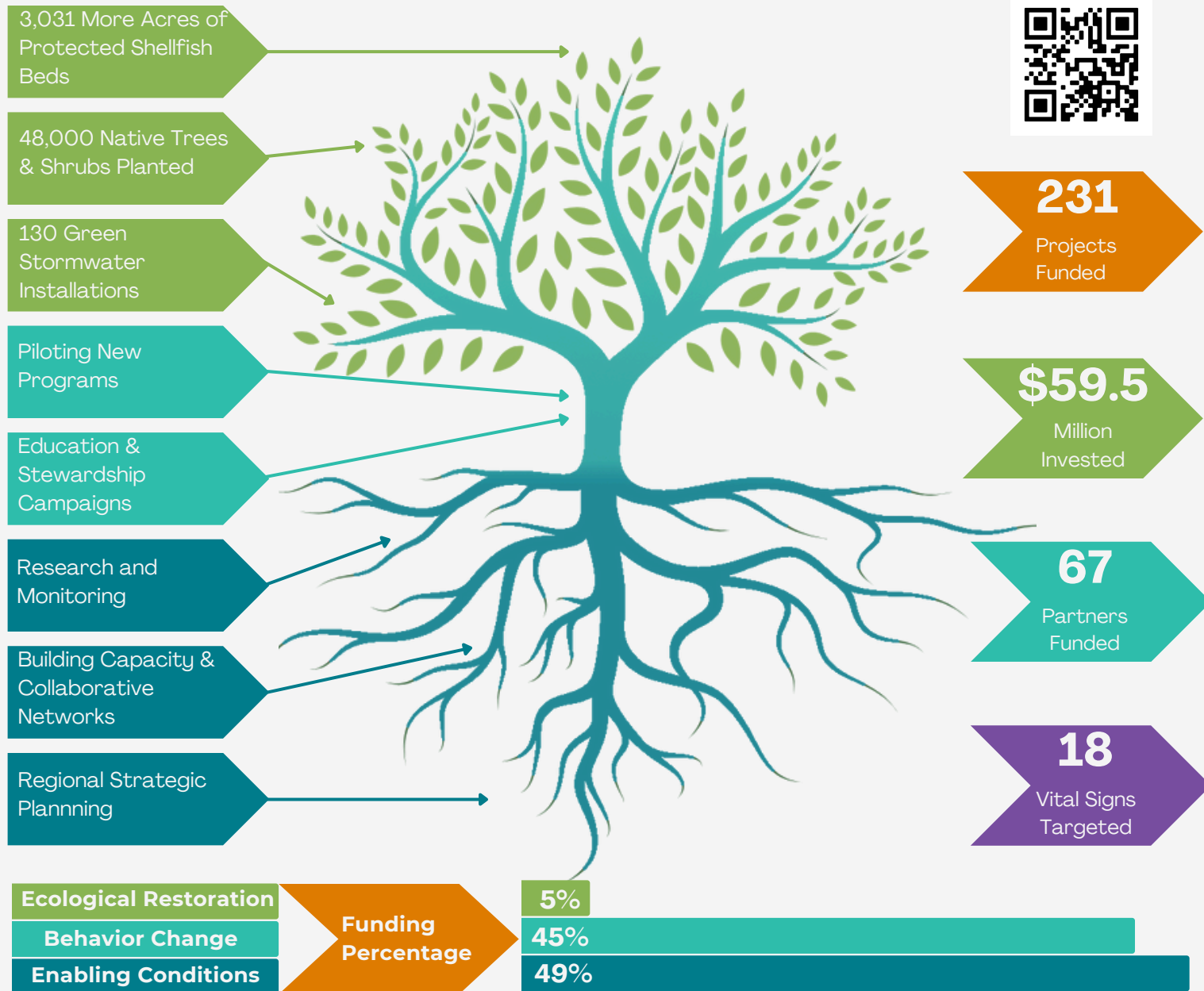


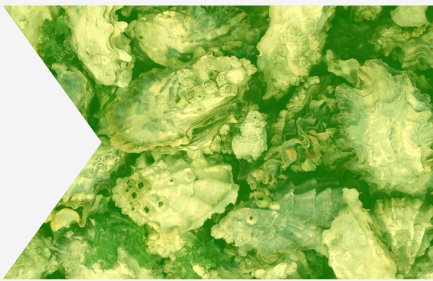
2016-24 Strategic Initiative Funding Highlights: Puget Sound Recovery from the Roots Up



The Puget Sound Strategic Initiatives (SILs) invest EPA National Estuary Program funds in transformative actions for lands, waters, fish, and people. The Habitat, Shellfish, and Stormwater SILs are led collaboratively by seven Washington state agencies, charged with strategic planning and investments in Puget Sound recovery. The SILs are a “roots up” approach to ecosystem recovery: by growing strong, collaborative networks, we’re laying the foundation for long-term ecological results greater than the sum of their parts.

From 2016 through 2024, the SILs worked with expert advisory teams to develop Implementation Strategies and direct EPA funding to impactful projects in the Puget Sound Action Agenda. These investments start below the surface by **enabling the conditions for success**, fostering the relationships, institutional capacity, and scientific basis needed to overcome recovery barriers. We also invested in **changing behaviors** around resource management, public education, and stewardship programs, building local and regional programs to protect shellfish beds, healthy habitats, and clean water.

Finally, a small but significant group of projects showed how meaningful progress on **ecological restoration** grows out of this strong recovery system. SIL-funded pilot projects replanted shorelines, installed green stormwater systems, and expanded harvestable shellfish acreage in communities around Puget Sound. These investments set the stage for future restoration activities to flourish as we continue working together for a healthy Puget Sound.



Shellfish Highlight:

Whatcom Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program

The Whatcom County PIC program worked to find and fix fecal pollution sources related to livestock and dairy operations, crop production agriculture, OSS, city stormwater, sewer infrastructure, pet waste, and urban wildlife in the Nooksack River watershed. This work helped in part lead to an upgrade of 360 acres of shellfish beds of the Lummi Nation's Portage Bay Growing Area.



Stormwater Highlight:

Breakthrough Research on Toxic Pollution for Salmon Waters

Breakthrough research led by UW-Tacoma identified 6PPD-quinone, a chemical derived from car tires which is exceptionally deadly to coho salmon. Following the discovery, Tribal, state, and Federal partners have mobilized to learn more, find alternatives, and test stormwater treatment methods to keep 6PPDQ out of salmon-bearing waters.

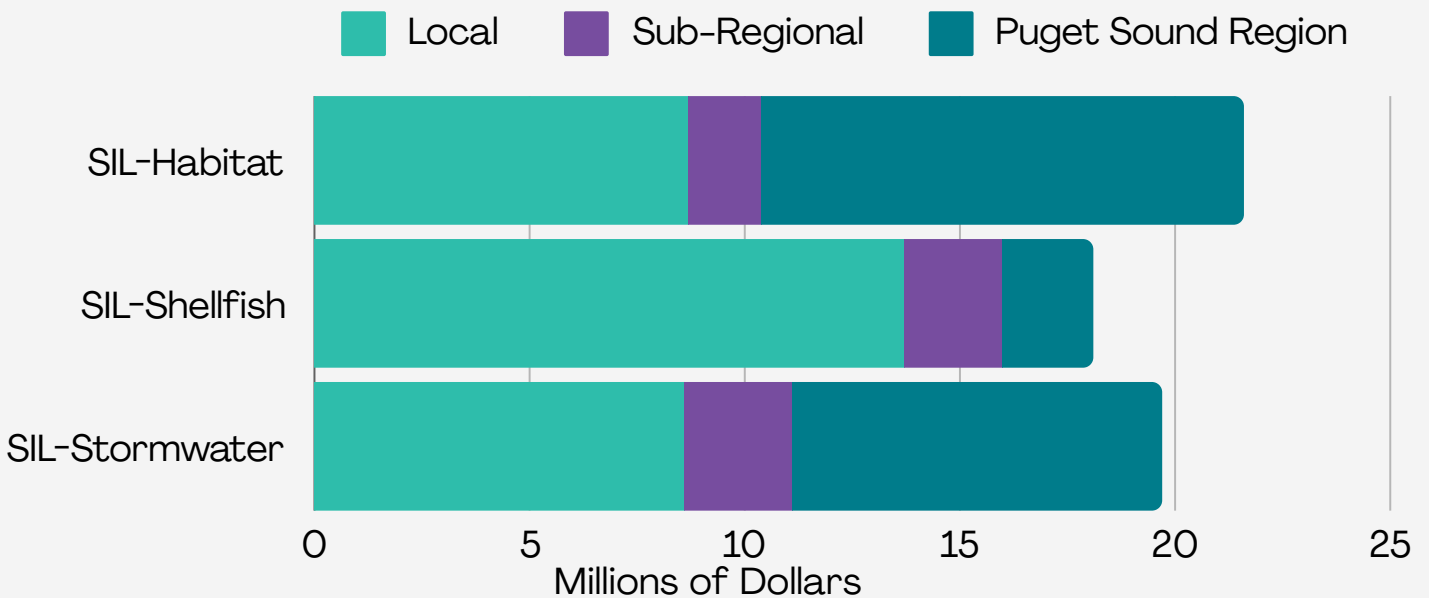


Habitat Highlight:

Vision of Restoration Along the Railroad

Breaking decades of deadlock, Tulalip Tribes, restoration partners and BNSF Railway worked together to address fish passage along 200 miles of nearshore railroad that impact access to 234 miles of stream habitat important for salmon. Ongoing partnerships are now leveraging federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to advance 20+ project designs.

Investing in Recovery at Ecosystem and Local Scales



Local

Projects targeted recovery goals in individual communities within a Local Integrating Organization boundary, accomplishing important benefits while testing pilots and models for broader application.

Sub-Regional

Projects took place across multiple watersheds to collect data, provide technical assistance, and facilitate partnerships across jurisdictions.

Puget Sound Region

Projects delivered research findings, policy and guidance, and collaborative networks to advance recovery across the Salish Sea ecosystem.