

Puyallup-White River (PWR) LIO Quarterly Meeting: More than Human World
September 23, 10:00-11:30 AM
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Welcome & Purpose

Cindy Haverkamp, PWR LIO Chair, kicked off the meeting by sharing background information on the theme “more than human world,” which was coined by eco-philosopher David Abram, challenging the idea that non-human life is lesser. To provide context on the concept, Cindy shared the poem titled “*The Same*” by Kristina Mahr, which encourages readers to rewild their thoughts and language. Lastly, Cindy noted two important movements on the global scene that consider the interdependence of life on earth. The first one is the [One Health](#) program run by the World Health Organization which recognizes the importance of protecting the health of humans, animals, plants, and our shared environment. The second one is [Planetary Health](#), a transdisciplinary consortium of educators, researchers, and NGOs committed to addressing the impacts of our human footprint on Earth’s natural systems. If you’re interested in diving deeper into this topic, consider reading a book from Cindy Haverkamp’s [More Than Human World reading list](#).

I. Round Robin Updates

- Pierce County recently released an [Urban Tree Canopy map](#) to identify the percent of urban tree canopy for urban areas, unincorporated areas, and cities and towns in Pierce County.
- Orca Recovery Day events in Pierce County on October 17:
 - [Partner Events Throughout the Region - Better Ground](#)
 - [Canoe Land Work Party in Tacoma](#)
- [Tacoma Tree Foundation: Pierce County Community Tree Program](#) - The Pierce County Community Tree Program is bringing free trees to Parkland, Spanaway, Midland, and South Hill from 2026-2027.
- The next [South Sound Science Symposium](#) is on October 15, 2026, at the Little Creek Casino Resort in Shelton, hosted by the Squaxin Island Tribe.
- The first Emerald Ash borer beetle has been detected in Vancouver, Washington in August 2026 which attacks ash trees. Learn more about how to identify an Emerald Ash Borer and what to do if you spot one: [WISC - Washington Invasive Species Council](#).

II. Rooted Together Panel: More-than-Human Partnerships for Resilient Communities

The following panelists provided short talks that highlighted the interconnected relationships between people, plants, animals, and ecosystems. Their presentations described how their organizations interact with plant and animal species, and they provided examples that underscore how the species they work with contribute to both ecological resilience and human health.

Kyrstin Onaga, Jack Hulgan, and Glenn Johnson; Pierce Conservation District (PCD). View their StoryMap [here](#).

Kyrstin and Jack described the work that PCD has engaged in the past decade to restore the South Prairie Creek Preserve to support salmon habitat and other species along the creek. A side channel was

built in 2020 to increase the spawning grounds for salmon and while salmon are benefitting from the restoration work that this site has undergone, there are other species who have also been observed. These species include mammals such as Roosevelt elk, racoon, American beaver, and muskrats as well as amphibians including pacific tree frogs and salamanders, and various species of invertebrates. Glenn shared a variety of birds that have been observed in the prairie such as red-tailed hawk, red-breasted sapsucker, and the Canada goose. Since 1990, about 95 species have been observed at the preserve and documented in the birding app, [eBird here](#). If you're interested in attending a bird walk, contact glennj@pircecd.org to see when the next one is.

Cat Mason, Puyallup Watershed Conservation Land Trust. View Cat's presentation [here](#).

Cat informed participants of the Carbon River Corridor BioBlitz campaign led by the [Puyallup Watershed Conservation Land Trust](#) (PWCLT) which launched in August 2026. A BioBlitz provides a communal opportunity to record as many species as possible within a designated location and time period. This BioBlitz targeted the towns of Orting, Buckley, Bonney Lake, Wilkeson, and Carbonado, which allowed for increased public participation and awareness of the recently established PWCLT within a large area of the Puyallup watershed. PWCLT used [iNaturalist](#) to document species observations, leveraging the platform's automatic species tracking and counting features to streamline data collection and facilitate efficient compilation and communication of results. Participants identified 939 species and made 3,082 observations which is a testament to the success of the campaign.

Mark Heckert; South Sound Beavers.

Mark shared an overview of South Sound Beavers, a nonprofit he founded with his son to promote coexistence between people and beavers through landowner education, habitat assessments, conflict mitigation, and, when necessary, beaver relocation. He emphasized that beavers are powerful partners in ecological restoration, creating and maintaining wetlands, improving water quality, recharging groundwater, reducing flood impacts, and supporting community resilience. The organization prioritizes coexistence over relocation or lethal removal because beavers inevitably recolonize suitable habitat, and Mark advocated for greater integration of beaver activity into restoration planning, stronger policy protections for beavers in Washington, and broader public understanding of the environmental and societal benefits they provide.

Elizabeth Mackey; Trout Unlimited. View Elizabeth's presentation [here](#).

Elizabeth provided an overview of the organization's mission, structure, and priorities, highlighting its role as North America's largest cold-water conservation nonprofit focused on protecting, restoring, reconnecting, and sustaining salmon and trout habitats through restoration, science, policy, and advocacy. She emphasized the ecological, cultural, and economic importance of Pacific salmon and trout, noting that healthy watersheds support fish recovery while also providing benefits such as clean drinking water, flood protection, drought resilience, recreation, and local economic opportunities. Trout Unlimited's work in Washington includes watershed-scale restoration projects, legislative and policy efforts, and ongoing initiatives in the Puyallup watershed and South Puget Sound, while encouraging collaboration with partners to advance shared conservation goals.

III. PWR LIO Updates

- **Multi-LIO Shoreline Armoring & Permitting Assessment:** This project is supported by shoreline funding that was allocated to LIOs to fund projects outlined in their Healthy Shorelines Action

Plans. The primary objectives of the project are to conduct a shoreline development change analysis, compile and analyze shoreline-related permit records, and evaluate compliance by comparing observed shoreline modifications with issued permits. Currently, Herrera, the Technical Lead, is incorporating input from the project's Technical Team (representing the PWR LIO is Keith Estes from Pierce Conservation District) that they provided on the assessment methodology developed by Herrera. Next, the Puget Sound Partnership will conduct a Q&A session on the methodology before moving to the next step. Down the road, LIOs will work with county staff to obtain shoreline permit records, and Herrera, along with the Project Management team, will begin analyzing data in the fall.

- **Floodplains and Estuaries Action Plan Next Steps:** The AHSS is finalizing its Floodplains and Estuaries Action Plan, which intends to synthesize and elevate existing needs and barriers identified through plans, planning efforts, and collaborative processes across jurisdictions throughout the Puyallup watershed. Prior to submission to the Puget Sound Partnership, the draft plan will be shared with the AHSS Executive Committee and Technical Teams for final review and feedback.
- **Puyallup Watershed Symposium:** The Symposium happening on Tuesday, December 8, 2026, at the Pioneer Park Pavillion in Puyallup from 9am to 5pm will provide an opportunity to learn about projects and programs across the watershed. This year's theme will focus on the interconnection between ecosystem recovery efforts and human health and how together they benefit local communities. Submit an [abstract here](#) by October 19 if you have a project that highlights the human dimensions of watershed work. [Register for the Symposium here.](#)
- **Healthy Shoreline Funding to Support PCD Shoreline-focused Environmental Education:** In June 2026, PCD was granted \$120,000 in pass-through funding from the EPA's National Estuary Program by the Puget Sound Partnership. The funding will be used to lead and develop education and outreach campaigns in support of PCD's Shore Friendly program. Since receiving the funding, PCD has hired a part-time contractor to develop a communications plan and update Shore Friendly outreach materials. The funding is also supporting Orca Recovery Day, happening on Saturday, October 17 with a kick-off event at the Puyallup Tribe of Indians' Canoe Landing site, followed by volunteer work parties across the county. PCD environmental educators are also purchasing supplies and training teachers to ensure three new schools are added to the Salmon in the Classroom program. Finally, planning is underway with Pierce County partners to develop two environmental educator symposiums between now and June of 2028.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next quarterly PWR LIO meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2026, combined with the Puyallup Watershed Symposium. If you have suggestions for agenda topics or newsletter content, please email Haley Morris (hmorris@rossstrategic.com).

List of Participants

Name	Agency
Ann Koenig	Pierce County
Bernie McKinney	Land Restoration Consultant
Cassie Knavel	Washington State Department of Agriculture

Cat Mason	Puyallup Watershed Conservation Land Trust
Chanele Holbrook	Department of Ecology/Stormwater SIL
Char Naylor	Puyallup Tribe of Indians
Cindy Haverkamp	Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
Dean McClary	Pierce County
Glenn Johnson	Pierce Conservation District
Hanna McDougall	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Jaal Mann	Pierce County
Jack Hulkan	Pierce Conservation District
Kevin Du	Department of Ecology
Kystin Onaga	Pierce Conservation District
Laurel Jellison	Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
Lisa Spurrier	Pierce County
Mark Heckert	Beaver Creek Environmental Services
Robby Wright	City of Sumner
Nancy Merrill	Friends of Boise Creek
Tom Kantz	Pierce County
Tripp Hart	Friends of Boise Creek
Haley Morris	PWR LIO Assistant Coordinator
Kristen Durance	PWR LIO Coordinator