G3: 4.4.e. Increase eelgrass beds in Puget Sound from 22,600 to 23,730 hectares by 2016

Puget Sound Eelgrass Recovery

Governor Update, March 2015

Megan Duffy, Deputy Supervisor for Aquatics
Jeff Gaeckle, Seagrass Ecologist
Matt Goehring, Policy Analyst

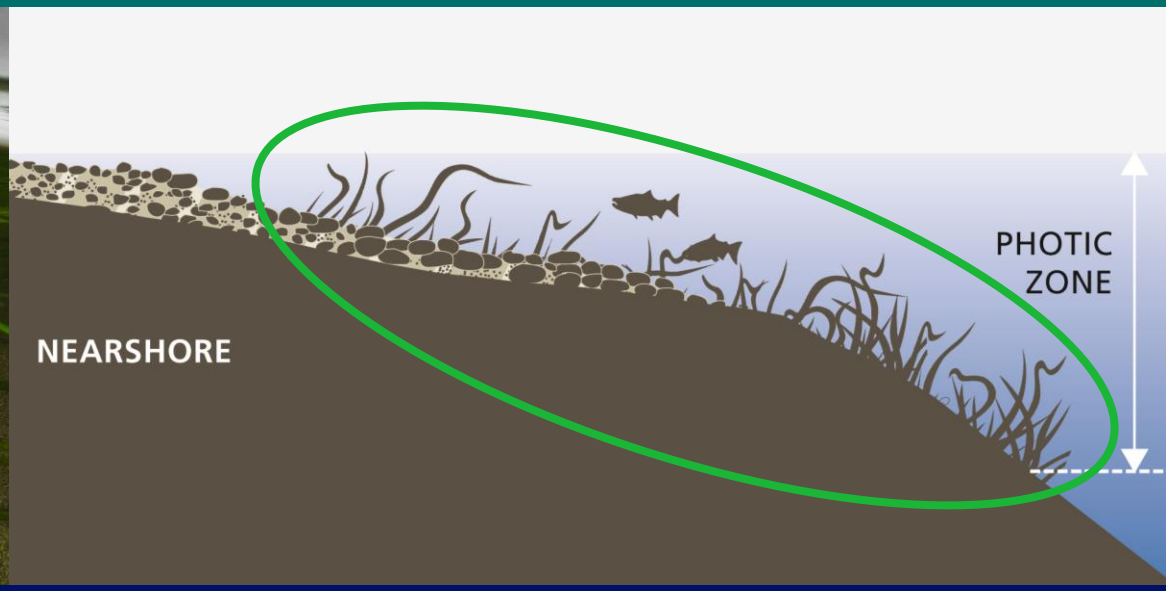
Why is Eelgrass Restoration Critical to Puget Sound Recovery?

Habitat

- ✓ Juvenile salmon
- ✓ Dungeness crab
- ✓ Pacific herring
- ✓ Waterfowl

Ecosystem Services

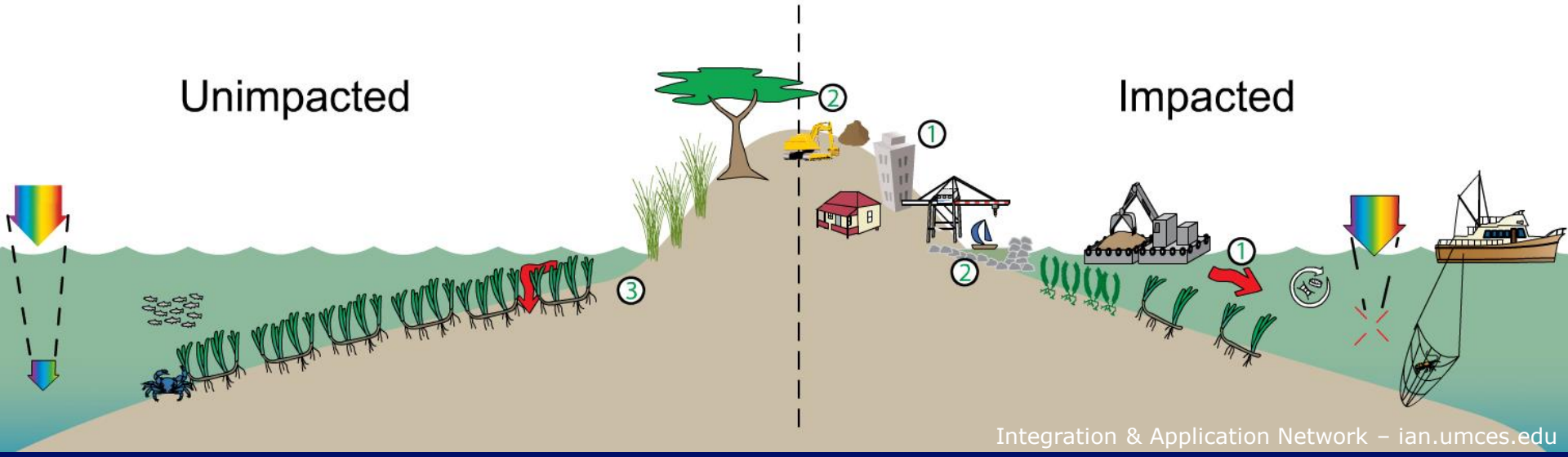
- ✓ Nearshore stabilization
- ✓ Carbon sequestration
- ✓ Ocean acidification
- ✓ Water filtration



Eelgrass Stressors

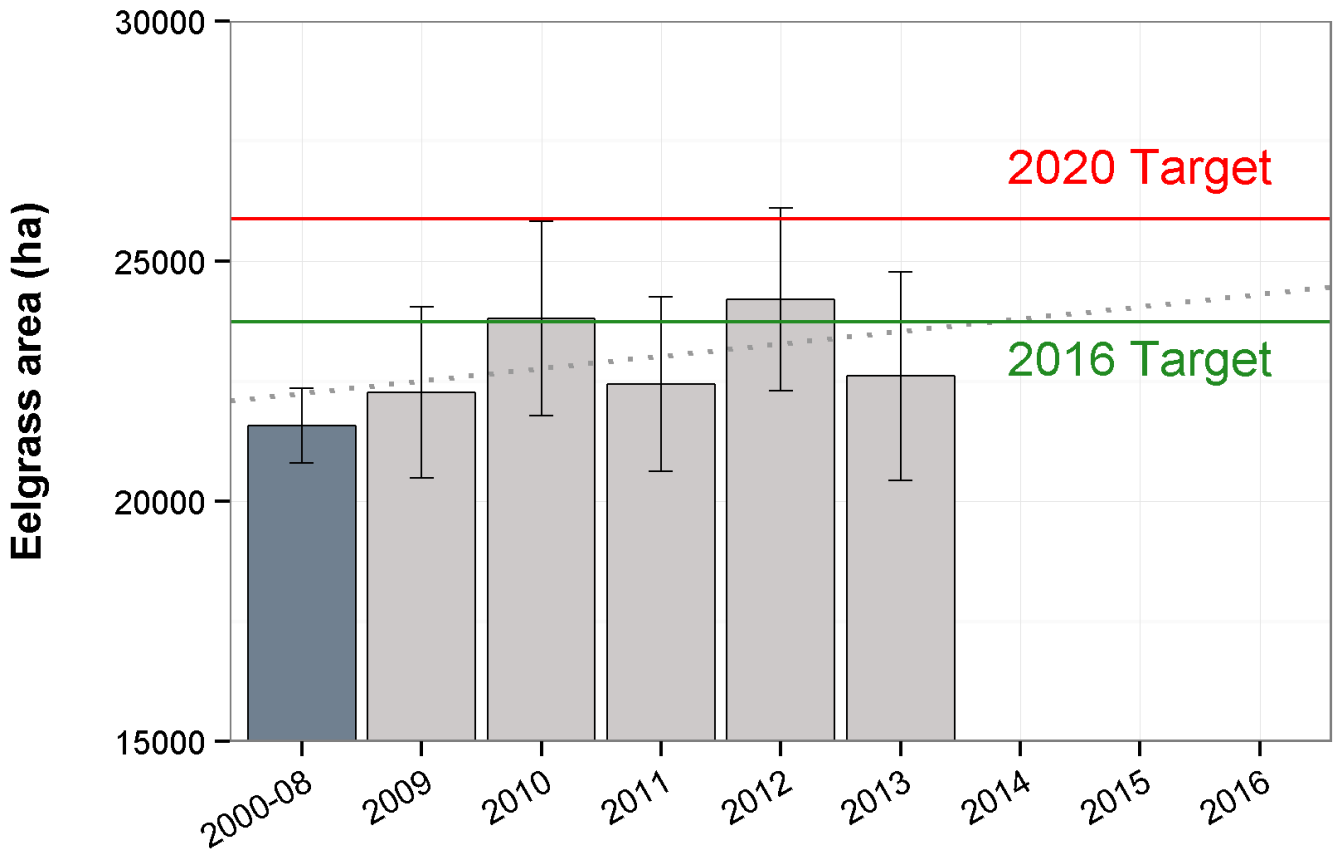
Physical Impacts
- construction
- groundings

Physiological Impacts
- light limitation
- toxicity
- disease



Integration & Application Network – ian.umces.edu

What is the Status of the Eelgrass Recovery Target?



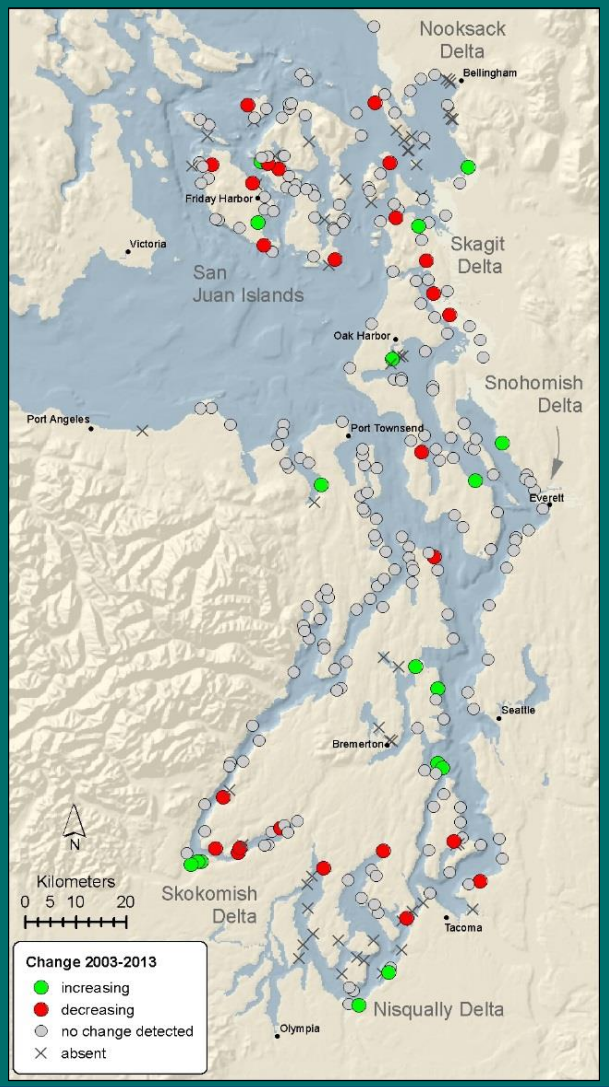
Specific & Regional Trends

Long-term:
More sites with decreasing eelgrass area

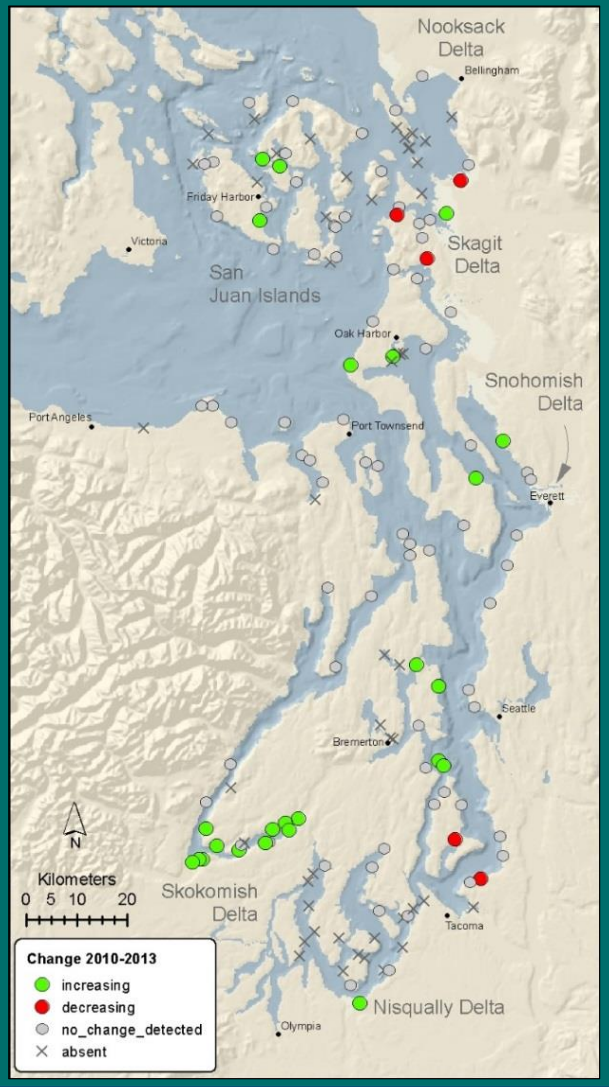
⇩

Recent:
More sites with increasing eelgrass area

2003-2013

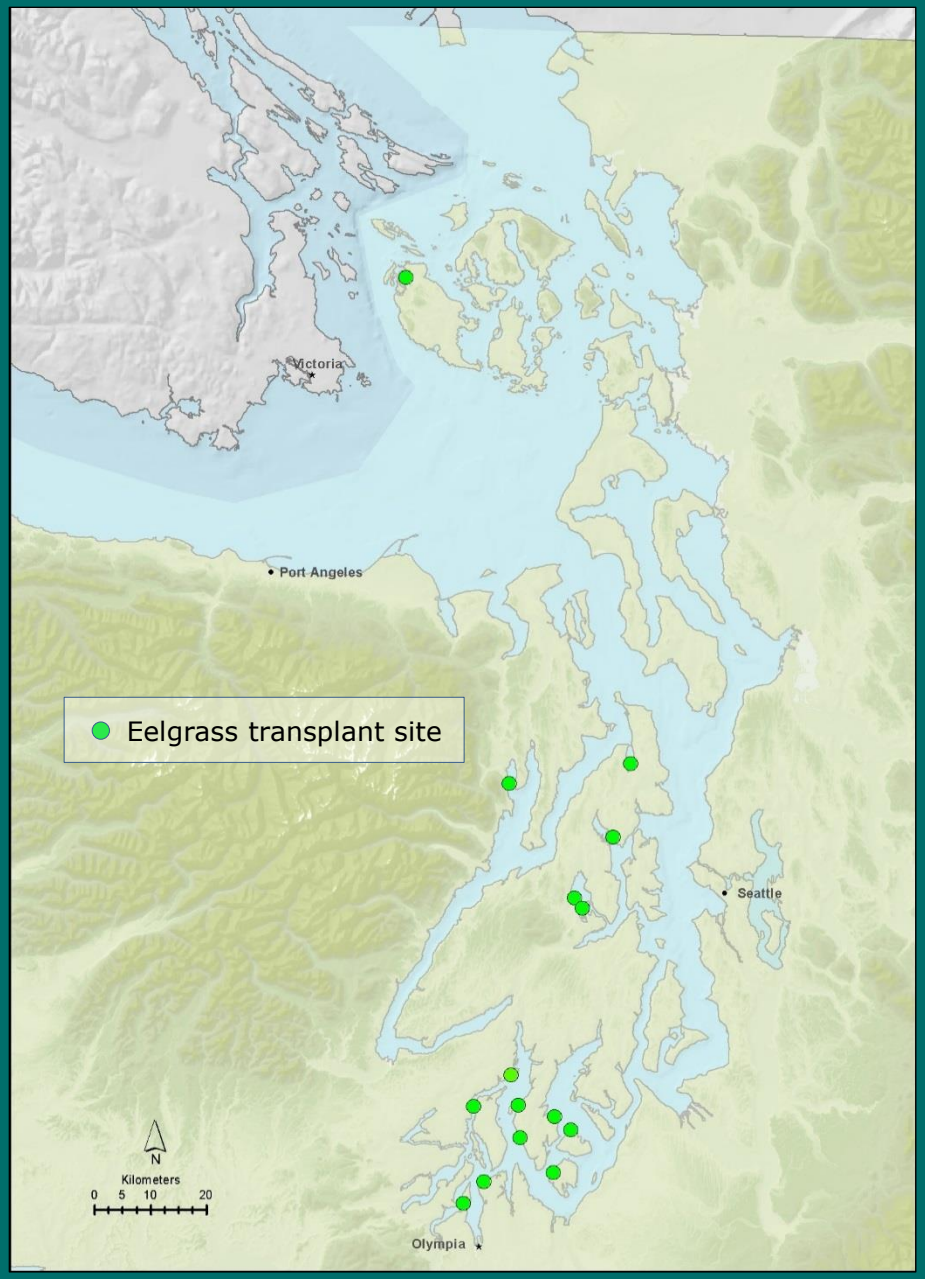


2010-2013



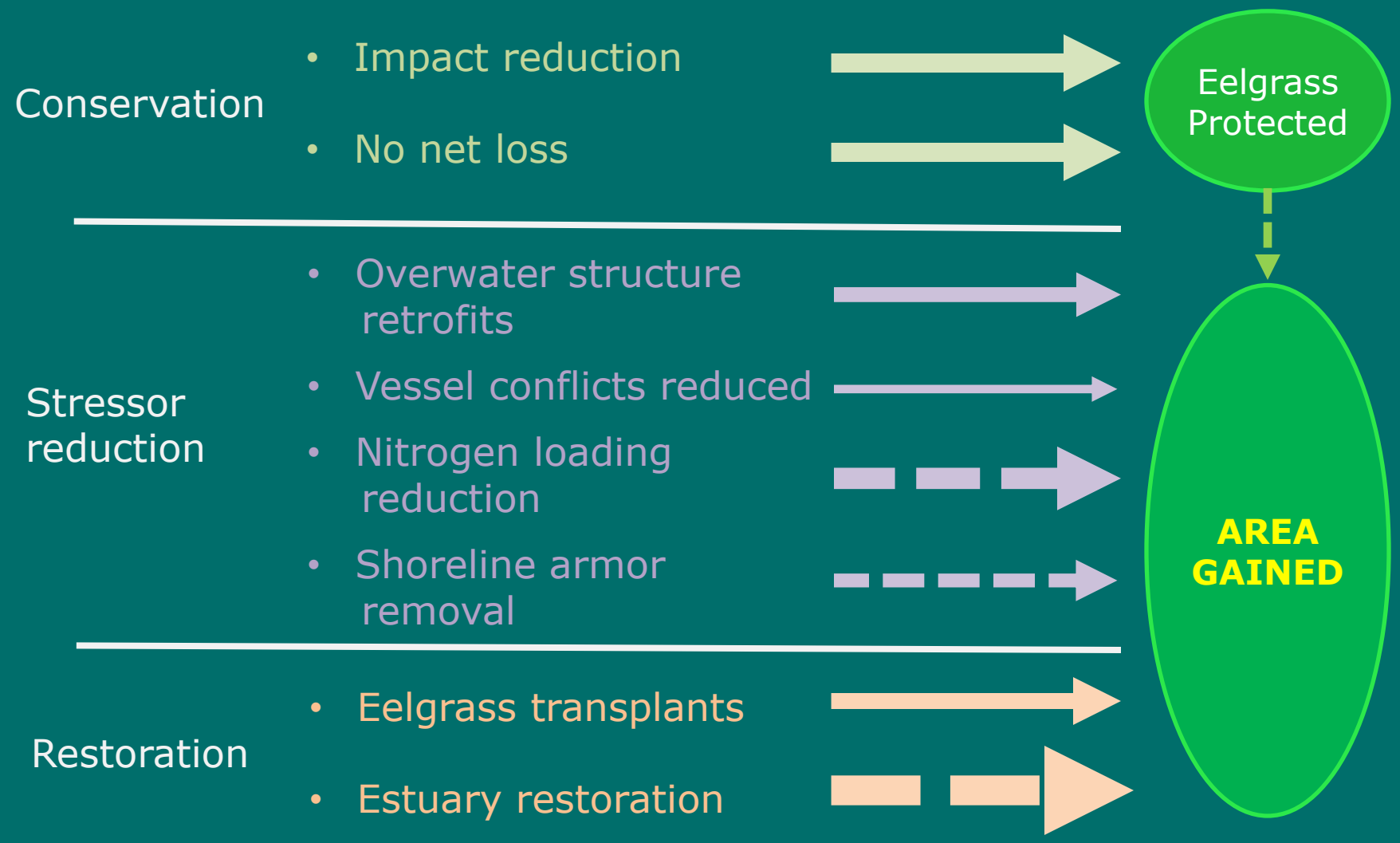
DNR Efforts

- Impact Avoidance
- Stressor Response Program
- Transplant Suitability Model
- Strategic Transplants
  - State & Federal ($2.3 M)



Who is Involved in Eelgrass Recovery Planning?

Recovery Strategy Recommendations



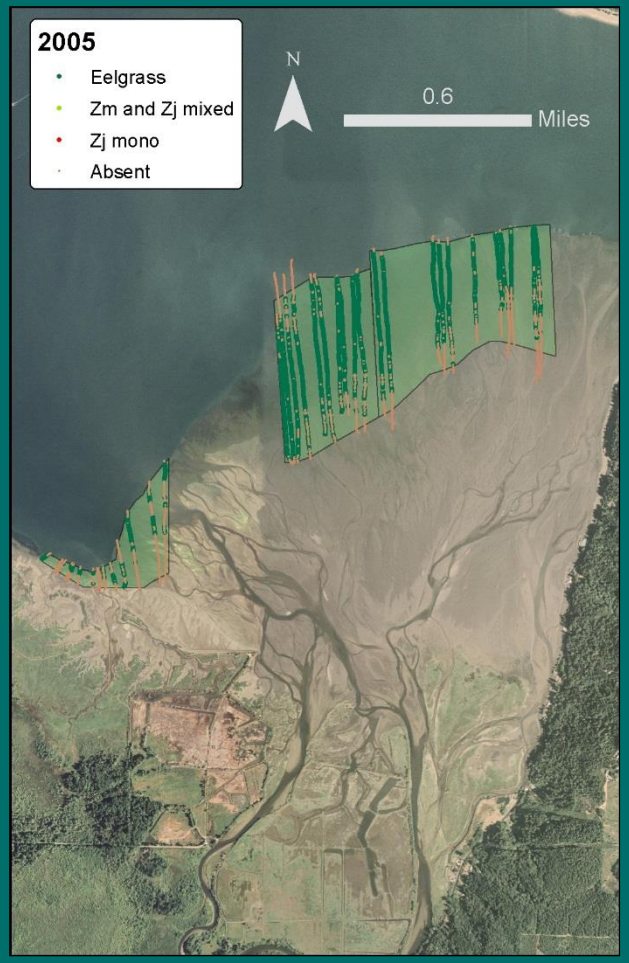
Building Off Recent Success: Skokomish Delta

Pre-2005

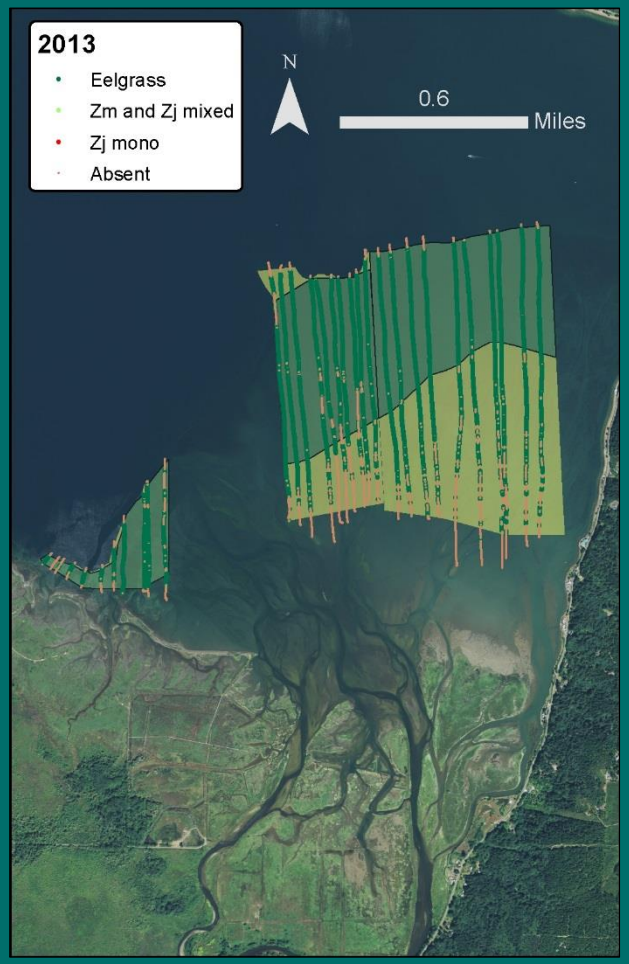
2013

Skokomish Delta Eelgrass Recovery

2005



2013



Multi-phase project restores >120 ha of tidal wetlands

⇩

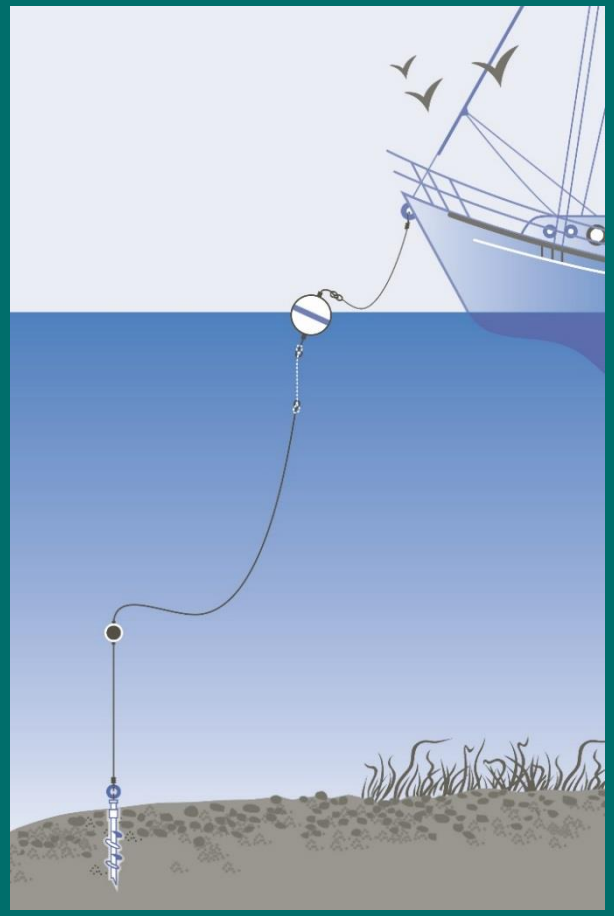
~ 80 ha increase in eelgrass beds

Where Should We Focus Recovery Efforts?

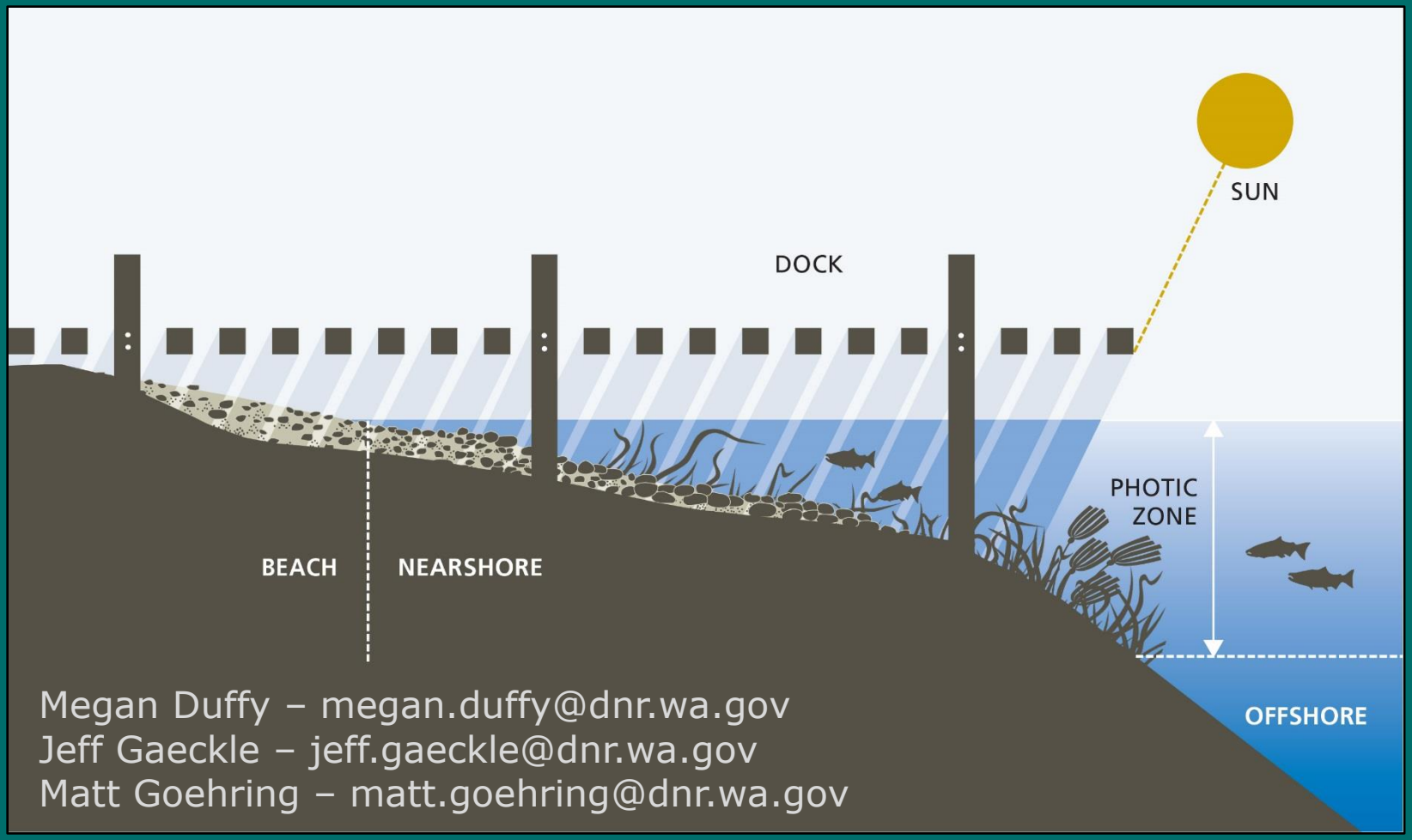
- River Deltas
  - Tidal wetlands
  - Strategic transplants
- Embayments
  - Water quality
  - Structure retrofits
  - Vessel moorage
  - Shoreline armor

Where is Assistance Needed to Meet the Eelgrass Recovery Target?

- Elevate Research Needs
  - Critical stressor-response relationships
- Ensure Coordination & Commitment
  - Concentrated investments within priority areas
- Secure Funding
  - Strategic plan positions partners for success



Questions?



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