

Pacific Coastal Ecology Branch: Research Overview

Walt Nelson

The Pacific Coastal Ecology Branch, Newport, Oregon is part of the Western Ecology Division of the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory of the U.S. EPA. The Branch conducts research and provides scientific technical support to Headquarters and Regional Offices in support of the Agency mission. The current research program supports three Strategic Research Plans: Safe and Sustainable Waters (SSWR), Air, Climate and Energy (ACE); and Sustainable and Healthy Communities (SHC). Research for SSWR is focused on development of tools to assist in the development of numeric nutrient criteria for estuarine waters of the Pacific Northwest. ACE related research will develop a database and set of decision rules for determination of marine species at risk from the effects of global climate change in the Pacific region. Research under SHC will help characterize the ecosystem goods and services (EGS) production and benefit functions that link changes in biophysical features to changes in the well-being of human populations in coastal communities. Work is particularly focused on estimating uncertainty, scalability, and transferability of estuarine EGS models.