



# HSIL GRANT FUNDED ROV & DIVER KELP RESEARCH

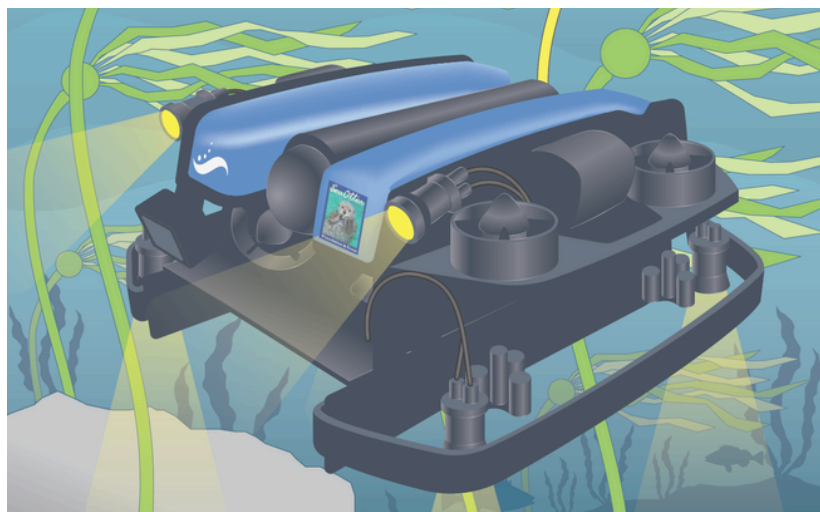
Coastal Climate Resilience (CCR) research,  
Conservation Programs and Partnerships (CPP)

Seattle Aquarium | Puget Sound Restoration Fund | Reef Check



## WHY COMPARE ROVS AND DIVERS?

In 2023, our team wanted to better understand how our newly developed remotely operated vehicle (ROV) surveys compare to other methods of collecting data. For example, while ROVs can cover large areas underwater, they can't see under aquatic vegetation, or easily see "cryptic" (hidden, or hard to find) species like a scientific diver can. To better understand how to optimally utilize the ROV going forward, we launched a project to directly compare the data collected by divers versus data collected by the ROV. This collaborative effort has advanced thanks to teamwork among state agencies, Tribes, non-profits, and scientists dedicated to help forest conservation and restoration.

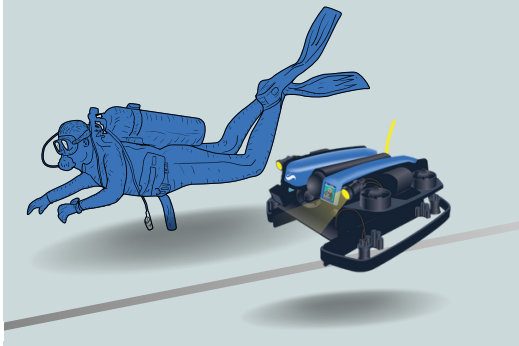


## HOW WE MADE IT HAPPEN

Thanks to a \$353,000 grant from the Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead (HSIL), a partnership between Washington's DFW and DNR with funds from the EPA's Puget Sound Funds, we focused on the **three initiatives below**.

## ROV-DIVER COMPARISON

In collaboration with Reef Check Washington's (RCWA) Kelp Forest Monitoring Program, Seattle Aquarium divers trained in RCWA protocols surveyed alongside our ROV to compare and contrast data collected by ROVs and divers at the same sites and on the same day.



## RESTORATION MONITORING

In collaboration with Puget Sound Restoration Fund, we used ROVs to survey a bull kelp restoration site to track the growth of outplanted bull kelp.



## HABITAT SUITABILITY MODEL

Using spatial analysis, we refined a model to help DNR and others identify the best locations for bull kelp recovery. You can find the bull kelp habitat suitability model here.



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**PUGET SOUND**  
National Estuary Program  
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE LEADS

