**Puget Sound Lowlands**

**Physical Features**

The Puget Sound Lowlands region stretches from Puget Sound south to the Columbia River in Washington. Forests once covered most of the land in this area, but today the region is filled with cities, towns and farms. The region is physically unique because of its many river valleys and floodplains. The Puget Sound area has an irregular shoreline and many deep, sheltered harbors, such as Elliott Bay in Seattle. Rivers are a dominant feature of the Puget Sound Lowlands, including the Chehalis River, the Cowlitz River, and the Columbia River.

**Climate and Natural Resources** 

The Puget Sound Lowlands region enjoys a mild climate. Puget Sound’s maritime climate provides cool winters and mild, pleasant summers. Farther away from the Sound, winter temperatures decrease and summer temperatures increase. Winters are generally mild, wet, and cloudy in most of the Puget Sound Lowlands region. Average annual rainfall in the region from the Canadian border to Seattle is 35 inches, but that amount increases gradually to 45 inches around Centralia then back down to 41 inches around our own Vancouver. 

**Industry**

The Puget Sound Lowlands region is the most populated and industrialized area in the Pacific Northwest, with many factories that produce goods shipped outside our region. One large industry in the Seattle area is Boeing, a major producer of aircraft. If you have ever taken a plane trip to another part of the country, you probably were flying in a Boeing plane. Industries such as Microsoft and Starbucks have their headquarters in the Puget Sound Lowlands. The moderate climate and abundant water make commercial fishing, outdoor recreation, and tourism major contributors to the economy of the Puget Sound Lowlands.

**Native American Tribes** 

The Native Americans of Puget Sound are known as Puget Salish and Southern Coast Salish. Salish territories covered a large part of what is now western Washington. The Salish had many things to be thankful for, since Puget Sound’s shorelines, rivers, prairies, forests, and mountain slopes were rich with resources. Each year, the Salish moved through their territories, setting up temporary camps to collect the wealth of land, sea, and river. The Vancouver area was inhabited by a variety of Native American tribes, most recently the Chinook and Klickitat nations, with permanent settlements of timber longhouses. The Chinookan and Klickitat names for the area reportedly meant “Land of the Mud Turtles.” 

**Major Cities and Landmarks**

When people think of Washington, they often think of the watery area of Puget Sound, with Seattle at its center. The major cities of Bellingham and Everett are in the north of this region. Tacoma, Olympia, our state capital, and Vancouver are to the south. A well-known landmark is centered in Seattle, the Space Needle, which is located in the Seattle Center. Tourists also travel from all around to visit Century Link Field and Safeco Field for sporting events. Seattle is full of many tourist attractions.

