

Question 4: The Topic Forum's Recommendations for Achieving a Healthy Puget Sound by 2020

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Photo by Mark Gardner

Key Science Concepts:

- To have a healthy Puget Sound, we have to protect and restore *the Ecosystem*.
- We have to allow ecosystem processes to happen.
- We have to leave room for the natural disturbances that drive the ecosystem.
- It means we have to limit human impacts that disrupt ecosystem process and habitats.

To Get a Healthy Puget Sound, we must balance

- *healthy ecosystem*
- *healthy human population*
- *healthy economy*



Science Recommendations

1. Create a clear science framework from which to act.
2. Use landscape assessment approach to make better land use choices.
3. Perform a rapid assessment of each Action Areas to identify ecosystem protection opportunities and restoration needs.



Science Recommendations

4. Close our knowledge gaps through scientific research.
5. Establish a common policy to choose areas for habitat restoration.
6. Build on science-based conservation strategies and plans.

Policy Recommendations

1. Protection = preferred approach for achieving healthy ecosystem.
2. In setting goals, consider the region's carrying capacity in light of ecosystem needs and human population growth.
3. Encourage growth management in a manner consistent with PSRC's *Vision 2040* Plan.

Policy Recommendations: Regulatory

Achieve Integration and Efficiency!

- State level: Adopt a single set of unified regulations to protect ecosystem processes.
- Federal level: Encourage Congress to enact the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy – *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century*

Policy Recommendation: Non-Regulatory Tools

- Examine and promote the best non-regulatory programs.
- Use acquisition and other incentive tools to gain permanent protection of key habitats.
- Expand use of conservation markets and off-site mitigation.
- Use a combination of strategies!

Governance Recommendations

We need strong accountability to ensure we meet our goals:

- There should be a single group or agency charged with ensuring protection is being met.
- Implement a monitoring and adaptive management framework.