PugetSoundPartnership
our sound, our community, our chance

San Juan/Whatcom Action Area Workshop (Bellingham)

March 10, 2008

Workshop Summary

Meeting Purpose

The Puget Sound Partnership held a workshop in Bellingham on March 10, 2008 to gather perspectives from stakeholders and add local knowledge and expertise to Partnership work. The meeting focused on addressing the question: *What is the status of the health of Puget Sound and the greatest threats to it?*

Meeting Overview

Approximately 75 people attended the workshop at the Bellingham Cruise Terminal. Among those represented were local and tribal governments, local organizations, businesses, federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, and citizens, all working for the protection and restoration of Puget Sound.

Meeting Summary

Pat Serie, the meeting facilitator, welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. Pat introduced Diana Gale, Leadership Council representative, who gave an overview of the Puget Sound Partnership's structure and described its scope. She explained the Partnership's Sound-wide approach and need for local support from action areas. She reiterated the Partnership's commitment to serve the unique needs of both San Juan County and Whatcom County communities through separate meetings. Diana reminded participants that, given the scope of work and tight timeline, the Action Agenda will not serve as a hard planning document but instead will serve to prioritize actions. Bob Kelly, Ecosystem Coordination Board member, discussed his role and interest in cleaning up Bellingham Bay and the Sound, protecting shellfish beds, and targeting implementation over planning.

Scott Redman, Puget Sound Partnership staff, provided an overview of the Partnership process. Scott described the Puget Sound Partnership, the six ecosystem goals, and the Action Agenda process. Scott went over next steps, including the status and threats analysis, topic forums, and the public input process.

The following is a list of questions and comments heard following the presentations. Answers are indicated with italics:

- How will social scientists be involved in this process? The scientific analysis will only be helpful if we include the social sciences, which also play a key role. *The Partnership has a social scientist working with the Science Panel and they are*

aware that this is a priority. The quality of life topic forum in April will address social science issues.

- Where are the economists? I think ecosystem services should be considered in this process. *We are aware of at least two projects that are studying ecosystem services. Again, we understand the deficiency here and are working to rectify the problem, but it won't be perfect this time around.*

- Have there been considerations made for trans-boundary issues? *Yes, we are working with the Environmental Protection Agency, which has worked broadly with Canada on air quality measures. This has come up in other action areas and the Partnership is aware that we need more coordination.*

- Who is the Puget Sound Partnership accountable to? *The statute that created the Partnership contains points related to the six ecosystem goals, which are tied to objectives. As a whole, we are also accountable to the agencies that work with us. Internally, we are accountable to the Leadership Council. The Puget Sound Partnership is not regulatory, but we are to hold others accountable for actions they undertake. The Action Agenda will have built in processes for public review of benchmarks to ensure accountability of other agencies.*

- Where does the funding for the Puget Sound Partnership come from? *We receive funding from both the federal government and the state.* Then the Partnership is a public agency and therefore accountable to the people.

- Understanding the Partnership used the best available science, what do we know about the threats used to inform the analyses already done? It seems the Partnership could be very valuable in finding what assets could be used relative to the threats that are chosen in this process. *That is a good summary of what the Partnership is trying to accomplish and your choice of terms (e.g. assets) is perfect.*

- How much data has already been collected locally? *The inventory handout summarizes local data collected to date. We welcome information about other studies. The topic forums will also help in gathering local information.*

Five topic specific workgroups, based on the ecosystem goals, were asked to consider and provide input on indicators currently being used, threats to Puget Sound and criteria for establishing priorities. The topic specific discussion notes will be available upon request. Key responses are highlighted below:

What are the biggest threats to the Puget Sound?

Water Quality	• Population increase • Impermeable surfaces • Cherry Point refineries and smelting operations • Bacteria
Water Quantity	• Increase in population/water demand • Land use changes (e.g. deforestation, increase in impervious surfaces) • Drainage/flood management practices
Species/Biodiversity	• Water quality • Aquaculture (number of hatchery fish released, pesticides/fertilizers) • Cross-boundary issues (e.g. invasive species and the Fraser River in British Columbia) • Land use planning (e.g. enforcement, education) • Sea level rise • Climate change • Soil acidification
Human Health/Quality of Life	• Values of new residents • Property rights/sustainability issue resolution • Diversity of cultural values • Competing bureaucracies across jurisdictions • Planning versus actions • Diminished treaty rights to resources (e.g. fish, shellfish, hunting)
Habitat/Land Use	• Conversion of agricultural and timber lands • Cross-border issues (e.g. Fraser River wood debris loading and contamination) • Air contaminants • Animal waste and agricultural loading • Inaction

What criteria are most important in evaluating potential projects?

Water Quality	• Funding sources • Tension between local and regional control • Cost-benefit
Water Quantity	• Prioritize natural/undisturbed hydrologic regimes • Address conflicts between competing in-stream/out-of-stream uses (e.g. agriculture/municipal and fish/in-stream)

	• Address regulatory issues and/or conflicts (e.g. reuse/reclamation regional water supply limitation and opportunities)
Species/Biodiversity	• Bottom-up approach • Work within schedule • Fund long- term monitoring
Human Health/Quality of Life	• Account for different cultural uses of Puget Sound • Include accountability and performance measures • Demonstrate inclusiveness in dialogue around issues • Environmental justice
Habitat/Land Use	• Use local stakeholders to prioritize work • Use a process-based approach that is sustainable and adaptable • Cost/benefit analysis

Following the topic specific discussions, participants shared additional comments and questions. The following are the responses. Answers are highlighted in italics.

- These events should be waste-free.

- There is a lot of good work happening locally. What is the Puget Sound Partnership doing to promote these local programs? Does the Partnership see the big picture? *The Partnership is gathering local information to set priorities for the action areas. Local involvement is critical.*

- The Partnership needs a marketing and sales approach. There needs to be a branding process so that the Partnership's message can be communicated broadly. I want a campaign that sells a message and discusses how our actions work together; something that shows a unified vision. *The Partnership is dedicated to an effective information campaign. The Communications Director and other staff are currently developing this material.*

Wrap-Up
Pat Serie thanked people for coming and let them know what to expect at the community conversation. She reminded participants to stay involved by filling out comment cards and/or visiting the Web site and submitting comments online. Diana Gale added that she was impressed with the quality of information that this group brought to the table and with the high caliber work already being done.