

Strait of Juan de Fuca Action Area Workshop

March 7, 2008

Workshop Summary

Meeting Purpose

The Puget Sound Partnership held a workshop in Sequim on March 7, 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 60 people attended the workshop at the Jamestown S'Kallam Tribe's Red Cedar Room. 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

Steve Tharinger, Ecosystem Coordination Board member, welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. Steve introduced Chris Townsend, Special Assistant to the Executive Director of the Puget Sound Partnership. Chris gave an overview of the Partnership's work, the six ecosystem goals, the Action Agenda, and the timeline for completion.

Jacques White, The Nature Conservancy of Washington's Director of Marine Conservation and a member of the Risk Analysis steering committee, introduced the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) status and threats analysis. He described the work and provided example maps to represent the data. Jacques stressed that the status and threats analysis is a synthesis of existing data. It is currently in draft form and the Partnership is looking for local feedback to complete the assessment.

A panel of four local representatives described some existing assessments addressing the action area. Doug Morrill, Lower Elwha Tribe, noted his work monitoring various indicators and establishing baseline conditions. Andy Brastad, Clallam County Environmental Health Director, discussed water quality, human health, and various studies underway in this area. Michelle McConnell, Associate Planner for Jefferson County, reviewed the Jefferson County Shoreline Master Program Update. Scott Chitwood, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, explained his work on salmonid stock assessments and provided some available resources.

Five facilitated workgroups based on the ecosystem goals were asked to consider and provide input on indicators currently being used, threats to Puget Sound health, and criteria for establishing priorities. Key responses are highlighted below:

What are the biggest threats to the Puget Sound?

Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy pollutants like PCBs • Lack of stormwater management plans • People
Water Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal low flows • Not linking development with availability of water • Timber industry • Unintended consequences of actions • Public water supply • Climate change
Species/Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemicals/toxins/oil spills/stormwater runoff • Urbanization/land conversion/shoreline alteration • Climate change/rising sea level
Human Health/Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource depletion • Land conversion • Transportation infrastructure • Lack of awareness/apathy
Habitat/Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure in floodplains and shorelines • Oil spills/freighter traffic • Human population and development • Clear-cut permitting

What criteria are most important in evaluating potential projects?

Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certainty of outcome • Science based status and trends • Ability to quantify and measure • “Biggest bang for the buck”
Water Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish land use laws that look at water capacity • Education and outreach
Species/Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection • Restoration that is cost effective • Quantifiable measurements • Long-term monitoring • Enforcement
Human Health/Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost and value of ecosystems • Local economies/local people • Community-identified goal/vision • Creating desirable communities with sustainable resources

Following the breakout sessions the groups reconvened for an open discussion. The following are comments/questions with answers highlighted in italics.

- One theme that came out in all groups was to concentrate on protection and to look at the total system.
- We need to consider where our current baseline is and how quickly that is changing. We need to solve futuristically. We can't base projects on the level of waters today. We need a 10- or 20- or 50-year horizon.
- We need more enforcement. I didn't hear anything about incentives. Incentives will help people do the right thing.
- Have oil spills shown up in discussion in other action areas or is it specific to this area? *Yes, we did hear about oil spills as a concern in the Whidbey Action Area and the Bremerton Action Area.*
- We need a balanced approach if we are going to grow but we want to save the environment.
- The Growth Management Act (GMA) has a balanced approach but it is at the expense of the whole ecosystem. County and city planners should look at critical areas together so they are consistent. The legislature should look at the GMA again.
- What about Canada? We are providing all the oil spill prevention for the Straits. *This has been brought up at every meeting. David Dicks and I (Chris Townsend) are going to Canada. We are continuing the conversation.*
- Will you be encouraging Canada regarding water treatment on Vancouver Island? *Yes, that is likely.*
- Is the Partnership going to weigh in on growth management issues? *Yes, I know GMA issues are being discussed and the Partnership is deciding how to weigh in on this. The Leadership Council recognizes that this is important and a decision is on the horizon.*
- When we're working on a community level we need to address growth management issues. Right now it seems like we're looking at the whole Sound to define how to move local community interests forward. *We have to look at the regional level and ask what is best for the Sound as a whole. It may be that*

salmon in your action area are affected positively by money spent in another action area. We have to give up the equality issues.

- I keep hearing that education and outreach are important. I think the anecdotal story is important. The Partnership has done a great job on the whole effort. How can we do that on an action area level? What are the local stories? What should be our local initiative? I think you need to market locally to the specific action area if you expect people to support this.
- I agree, I think the Port Angeles Harbor oil slick is a good story that will speak to people more than a regional campaign. I think you have to talk about specific locations for it to resonate with people
- I think the Shoreline Management Act is just as important as the Growth Management Act.
- We need to keep the concept of preservation, not just restoration, in the regional and local campaigns.
- Chinook used to be local, now they are showing up everywhere. They are critical to the entire Sound. Every action area is important.
- We talked about Quality of Life/Human Health and where we want to be by 2020. When can we discuss this? *The indicators work that is going on right now will help us answer that question.*
- These organizations are doing important work in the area: The Clallam Marine Resource Committee, the Jefferson Marine Resource Committee and the Elwha Nearshore Consortium.

Wrap Up/Next Steps

Jacques White thanked people for coming out. He said that the Partnership is working hard to accomplish a great deal in a short time. The local input is critical. There will be topic forums around the Sound where the Partnership will identify existing assessments and gaps. He encouraged attendees to participate in the next round of meetings.

Chris Townsend thanked everyone for participating. He explained that summaries would be posted on the web and that all the flip chart notes would be passed on to the topic forums. He encouraged people to send comments and to watch the Web site for upcoming meeting times and locations.

John Cambalik, Puget Sound Partnership Regional Liaison, asked people to submit assessments if they brought them.