

Hood Canal Action Area Workshop (Kingston)

July 15, 2008

Port Gamble S'Klallam House of Knowledge

Meeting Purpose

The Puget Sound Partnership held a workshop in Kingston on July 15, 2008 to gather perspectives from stakeholders and add local knowledge and expertise to Partnership work. The meeting focused on reviewing the Partnership's regional priorities for the recovery of Puget Sound, discussing the newly-drafted action area profile and identifying local priorities.

Meeting Overview

Approximately 69 people attended the workshop at the Port Gamble S'Klallam House of Knowledge. Among those represented were local and tribal governments, local organizations, businesses, federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, and citizens.

Meeting Summary

Teri King, Hood Canal Action Area Ecosystem Coordination Board representative, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Ron Charles, Chairman S'Klallam Port Gamble Tribe. Ron explained that Haaa Chi Nought means House of Knowledge. The tribe chose the name because they wanted a name representing the mission and purpose of the space. He welcomed everyone and noted the S'Klallam Tribe was proud and happy to share their space with a group of people who are working for Puget Sound.

Ray Outlaw, meeting facilitator, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. He recognized those affiliated with the Partnership in attendance: Bill Ruckelshaus, Christine Rolfes, Duane Fagergren, John Cambalik, Teri King and Dave Herrera. He summarized the day's agenda and asked for questions and comments from the audience.

Martha Neuman, Action Agenda Director, introduced herself and gave a brief presentation about the Partnership. She underscored the importance of the Action Agenda as a living, adaptable roadmap for the protection and restoration of Puget Sound. She outlined the Partnership's role and described the process for developing the Action Agenda including: inventory work, February and March action area meetings, and topic forums.

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

- Some organizations are not listed on the inventory form. *We want to find out today if yours is missing and make sure that it is added.*

Session 1: Strategic priorities and action area profile

Martha Neuman briefly described the Partnership's initial strategic priorities. She mentioned that the priorities are based on the work of the topic forums and have been reviewed by the Leadership Council and Ecosystem Coordination Board. She underscored the importance of efficiency and effectiveness in the process and explained that every action area will have a chance to weigh in and give feedback as to whether or not these priorities capture the essence of local efforts underway.

The following is a list of questions and comments heard regarding the Initial Strategic priorities following the presentation. Answers are indicated with italics:

- Are the priorities in order of priority? *No.*
- Have you thought about what the urgent things are? *They are yet to be determined. Priority A still needs some refinement. An action may be the most urgent for some and not the most urgent for others.*
- Where does enforcement fit in? *Enforcement is encompassed in Priority A and we can talk about that later.*
- It appears that there are four broad areas. If they are all equal, how do we go about prioritizing projects when that time comes? *These are Sound-wide priorities, the overarching priorities of the Partnership. The specific prioritized projects fall underneath these.*
- Does Priority D include air, land or other pollution? The language looks pretty specific to just water pollution. *Yes, other sources would be included.*
- Is there a role in these priorities for economic development? *Yes, economic development would be included in Priority A. Again, it needs to be worded differently. Think of Priority A as “doing things differently” and including economic development in this discussion would be “doing things differently” .*
- Has there been consideration for a Class B waiver? *We have not been that specific.*
- I think that Priority A needs a refinement in the wording. The most urgent project may not be solvable and money may be available to fix other problems. You need to leave room for that. *Yes, definitely.*
- I think the role of humans is a commendable inclusion and I know there is a strong mandate in the legislation, but I think it could carry a little more weight. *Yes, the Ecosystem Coordination Board and the Leadership Council have talked specifically about this. The human element theme needs to be carried through all of the Partnership documents.*
- One thing that I think is absent from these priorities is a specific work program for accomplishing these objectives. There needs to be a connection between the

generalized plan and implementation. I hope this gets to that point. *The Action Agenda will do just that.*

- Have you considered adding an educational component to the priorities? *The Partnership has an outreach and education program, but this should be part of a newly worded Priority A.*

Duane Fagergren, Regional Liaison, presented the Hood Canal Action Area Profile. He explained that in developing the profile, key information was culled from existing studies, locally reviewed and then written by one author. Duane then asked participants to go through the profile section by section and provide high level comments.

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

- What is the process for suggesting word changes to an action area profile? *We'll take your comments any way you want to give them. You can comment online through the threaded discussion, leave us comments today or e-mail the Partnership (actionagenda@psp.wa.gov). All comments will be provided to staff.*
- Will there be a process to wordsmith this document? Will there be a small group session? *We'll be working on this for the next several months. Please submit your comments to us and we will work with Duane if there are things specific to this area that might require a small working group.*
- Why did you write with one voice if there are seven distinct different areas? *That has been tenuous throughout this process. If there is a word or phrase that you have a specific issue with, please let us know.*
- It sounds like the process started with broad bullets, became a broad profile and was then adapted into a broad cartoon. Eventually we will start flushing this thing out and getting to specific projects. How much do we need to obsess over what is in or out of this profile? I think the staff did a great job writing this and putting it together, I am just concerned about the level of detail. *This is something we have struggled with. We want this to be user-friendly but if there is something missing from a local standpoint, we want to note that.*
- In the profile, under ecosystem stressors, where do these statements come from? I'm concerned that the word 'some' is used to represent 94% [of the dissolved oxygen problem coming from natural sources]. Later it says that the shoreline has been modified by 27 %. Can you define modified? I think it's more like 100%. It would help me if there was justification for these statements. It seems like this is more opinion instead of fact. *The facts are data based, but we need to add some sources.*
- Under stressors, fisheries that have been closed due to stressors should be included. It says that rockfish and flatfish are not fishable. *It is included but we should check the wording to make sure that it is clear. I think it would help if we added "closed by Fisheries."*

- In the statement about land use, there is nothing about the lower Hood Canal economy and I think it should be added.

Duane pointed out the GIS and the cartoon maps and explained them as communications tools for the general public, meant to be simple and high level. Martha added that there will be a companion cartoon map for all of Puget Sound. She encouraged attendees to provide feedback using the post-it notes provided or to e-mail suggestions.

After the break, Ray led a round of introductions where each participant was asked to state their name and organization.

Session 2: Aligning local and regional priorities

Martha led a discussion about each of the Partnership's priorities by asking the following questions:

1. What are you currently doing in support of this priority?
2. What are the top priorities?
3. What are the local barriers to achieving the priority?
4. What else can you do to help the Partnership achieve this priority? How can the Partnership help you achieve this priority in your action area?

Priority D: *Prevent the sources of water pollution*

- The health district is looking at the shoreline, sampling it to find things other than water and removing the contaminants. What would work better is education and to stop the pollution before it happens.
- We identify violations of health codes and enforce them. What would help is more staff to have an ongoing presence in watersheds so we are not constantly jumping from fire to fire. Some additional staff could then focus on education.
- WSU Extension – Kitsap County focuses on education, public meetings and directing people to the proper place to address their concern. Many people are very interested in septic systems and how to maintain them. People want to know what they can do along the shoreline. We connect them and educate them. We work with agencies and industries whose practices feed pollution into the Sound. Our biggest challenge is funding all of this education.
- WSU extension – Jefferson County has a Beachwatchers program, a Shore Stewards program and other education programs within Hood Canal that have been successful.
- We do chemical marine research with many groups and are working on prevention. A working relationship with the Partnership and the Department of Ecology would help with sampling. We need to find out who has what data, summarize, find gaps and think about the details of the toxic contaminants. I have worked with people on studies that look at enough different data sets to get true, usable data. There is great data on stormwater pollution and non-point pollution,

- the larger pieces like point-source pollution need more attention and we need preventative regulations in place.
- We have had some success in getting homeowners to do things like install fences to keep cows out of the creeks. Unfortunately, this doesn't solve the whole problem because cows still need to access the creek for water and there are pathogens and nutrients entering the creeks through manure. Cost shares for these homeowners would go a long way to encourage people to participate.
 - ShoreBank provides loans to people who need new system upgrades for septic systems. We need systematic monitoring and maintenance so we can measure the impacts.
 - The county public health department does shoreline surveys, door-to-door septic system programs, and has a water quality monitoring program. In the inventory, it looks like Jefferson County Conversation District and Jefferson Public Health were combined.
 - The Partnership needs to serve as a link between federal and state agencies. We have several project proposals including implementing groundwater and surface water monitoring, stormwater monitoring, education and outreach, and removing derelict debris. I would like to see you reinforce and sponsor the Puget Sound Restoration Act. The lower watershed levels should have the most say because they are closest to the ecosystem.
 - There are many Mason County representatives that have not spoken because they are not here.
 - The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is implementing an on-site sewage rule that requires DOH to review and approve systems. They are assisting counties with management plans. These plans NEED to be developed. The system needs state-wide goals , but more ongoing monitoring at a local level.
 - There should be a *Priority E: Education and Enforcement* and it should be raised to the highest priority. I recently planted some native plants and watched my neighbor pull the same plants out and put in grass because he did not know. All permits should go out the door with an education package.
 - Rocky Point Oyster Company works with The Nature Conservancy to prevent steep slope run off. There should not be timber cutting in sensitive areas.
 - On the private side, there are options for bioremediation of drainfields which results in a big reduction in fecal coliform and nitrogen. The state code is not set up to recognize drainfield nitrogen. This new technology would save homeowners and the state a lot of money.
 - Mason Conservation District has an agricultural focus and is working on getting pathogens out of the water. We work with land owners to get things done on the ground and to deal with surface water before it gets into the Sound. We need consistent, predictable, dedicated funding sources. Don't just fund what is popular now. The estuary project with the Skokomish Tribe should be funded.
 - Put all of the money into education. Teach people what happens when you flush your toilet. You should strongly advocate for the advance treatment of any sewage effluent dumped into Puget Sound.

- There is a water quality program on the reservation (Skokomish) and we could develop a wastewater treatment center with funding.
- We need all parts of the ecosystem included if we are going to be successful. We have not said enough about how stormwater affects water quality.

Priority B: *Protect the intact ecosystem processes that sustain Puget Sound*

- We need to increase protection, work with the state to monitor water quality, review SEPA documents and document actions. We are lacking a good understanding of local natural resources.
- There was a recent study on point source pollution.
- We need education, public demonstration and we need a site people can visit. If the public does not see it, they will not know how to fix it.
- Identify functioning processes along the shoreline. Partner with local organizations to prioritize local projects.
- It is hard to protect a system when you are looking at an individual permit coming in. We need to look at the Growth Management Act because some required actions are detrimental to ecosystem protection.
- Shoreline master plans support policy and regulation.
- Lenders are working with Jefferson Land Trust to approve loans that support the health of people like family farms. Family farms can sustain people throughout region.
- Port Gamble Bay has been successful with extreme, out-of-the-box, cooperative projects. We need to restore systems so they are highly productive.
- Land owners are ready and willing to restore critical area buffers and are looking for systems / funds to help.
- Cascade Land Conservancy is working on buying the forest on Tahuya Peninsula but we do not have the funds.
- Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG) is working on beach restorations, removing old equipment and dike removal.
- Riparian buffers are an important part of the ecosystem. I would suggest that farmers get paid to have buffers. There needs to be more funding.
- Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) is working on riparian zones and site specific systems. They are working with land owners on an eco-regional assessment.
- Some local groups have incentive programs for land use and habitat and economic development that are working well.
- In shoreline analysis, look at the level of prioritization. It is a tool that will be useful in the permit review process. Most of the watersheds are currently outside of the county code. Funding would be helpful to implement new codes.
- Port Gamble Bay and Dabob Bay should be priorities. There are some major issues that are active threats. We have the second largest heron stock in the state.

The proposed marina would shut down the shellfish bays. We have talked to WSDOT about the ferry issues.

- Water rights and water quantity are the big impediments to this process. The state code does not let us use adaptive management to save the resource. We need an incremental modeling process. We must fix the regulations before the water quality of Puget Sound can be fixed.
- Bioremediation is an expensive way to fix drainfields. We need to create new drainfields.

Priority C: *Reestablish the ecosystem processes that sustain Puget Sound*

- If we support salmon and their food webs, we are improving Hood Canal, we are improving the health of shellfish and birds, and we are improving flooding issues for people. Wood in streams slows down the flow of water making pools for fish and holding water before entering Hood Canal. One action can have multiple benefits.
- I think you should look at supporting the removal of derelict fishing gear. It would greatly decrease marine life mortality. *Is this a problem in Hood Canal? (The general consensus was 'yes'.)*
- There are juvenile salmon programs and models of salmon life with the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group and the Hood Canal Coordinating Council. There are connections between the survivability of salmon as they go through the stations within the model and the marine environment.
- Bioremediation is a gentrification strategy and ecosystem process that is applied to septs. The Puget Sound Action Team funded a project that was not successful because the land owner denied access, but we learned a lot. The Partnership should fund demonstration projects to help the private sector.
- There are 15 years of bioremediation drainfield technologies. We could study systems for years and realize that the systems that work are right under our nose.
- Why are we continuing to allow these bodies to be impaired? For example, we are taking out old bulkheads, but we continue to permit new ones.
- That question comes up all the time – it is the public’s biggest question. I wish I had the answer. What I now know through shoreline education on Bainbridge Island is that if you fix one thing it fixes another and it has a domino effect. The answer is to “not do any more harm.” We have not given local officials the tools to do anything about this problem.

Priority A: *Ensure that activities and funding are focused on the most urgent and important problems facing the Sound (That is: Work more effectively and efficiently on priorities)*

- I have watched this process over the past year. What is missing is that the Partnership should take into account that the economics are not secure. We do not know how many things are going to get funding but we have the technology to do

- a lot. We have new world problems that we did not have a year ago. The economy is unstable. It is time for the government to fund these projects, especially water reclamation and removing pharmaceuticals from the water.
- One barrier is the regulatory system doesn't work at the county or state level. For example, the Hydrologic Project Approval (HPA) process does not include full review. Projects just get slammed on us because we are so busy fighting against other projects that already went through and we do not have the time to work together. We have to start looking at things a whole lot differently.
 - The Lower Hood Canal dissolved oxygen problem needs regulations that prevent future developments from making the same mistakes. Second, we need to address small lots that were grandfathered in under the GMA. We need incentives for the homeowners and long-term loans. All these things need funding.
 - One of the key barriers is the lack of comprehensive data and monitoring of things like surface and groundwater quality and quantity. There are a lot of data gaps here in this action area. You need data to show progress and to help convince the skeptics in the community. When you have spotty funding it creates gaps.
 - The Partnership should support the need for sewer systems and water reclamation projects where appropriate. More studies on the causes of water pollution would be valuable.
 - There is a giant hole in data distribution and information sharing. The Partnership could fund a central information distribution system. We need to share with each other.
 - We need to streamline the gaps, overlaps and conflicts in regulation.
 - We have an issue with regulating septics in that we can not trespass so we do not have access to monitor the systems. This could be fixed with legislation.
 - We now know that the vesting laws in this state are inappropriate.
 - If there was more habitat monitoring, we could see progress and improvements.
 - One of the biggest risks is population growth over the next 20-59 years. The state Office of Financial Management consistently produces huge growth numbers and then asks local governments to prepare for that growth. We need to change this approach. What if we advertised for moving to other areas of the country?
 - The limitations are data gaps (numbers and area) in watershed priorities for protection of shoreline. These are often outside the jurisdiction of shoreline regulations. We do not have time to use the tools so we do not know if they are working.
 - We need to find a way to sustainably manage onsite system issues. The weak link is monitoring and ongoing maintenance. The health departments need to implement management plans but they need funding to do that.
 - Hood Canal has not been developed as much as the rest of Puget Sound, but we do have stormwater runoff problems. As development occurs, I hope we are using the best management practices (BMP) for stormwater. However, we need funding for existing problems.

- We need to look at population growth and climate change, and use science to find the range of minimum and maximum impacts for each action area.
- With the economic climate and the slow down in permit applications, we have a window of opportunity to make changes to our processes.
- There is a lot of focus on septic systems, but we have not quantified the damage. We know cities are putting out lots of pollution. We should deal with point source pollution first.
- I encourage you not to give up on this priority. Let's get the priority right, understand it and agree. Let's stick with the priorities and make them happen instead of trying to make everything happen.
- Desalination is a new water source for growing communities. In addition we need to make it affordable to make bad water reusable.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Martha thanked everyone for coming and supporting the Partnership's efforts. She told the group that profile comments could be submitted until August 15, 2008. She explained the Partnership would be back in the fall for another round of action area meetings. These meetings will provide an update on the status of the Action Agenda and include more specific information about its contents. Martha also noted that the Partnership is developing a SEPA checklist for the Action Agenda and a determination is pending, after which there will be a public comment period.

Bill Ruckelshaus thanked everyone for coming and participating, and noted that we will not be successful as a partnership if we are not successful at a local level. He stressed the need to act as a partnership and that we need everyone's help and commitment to develop and carry out the Action Agenda.