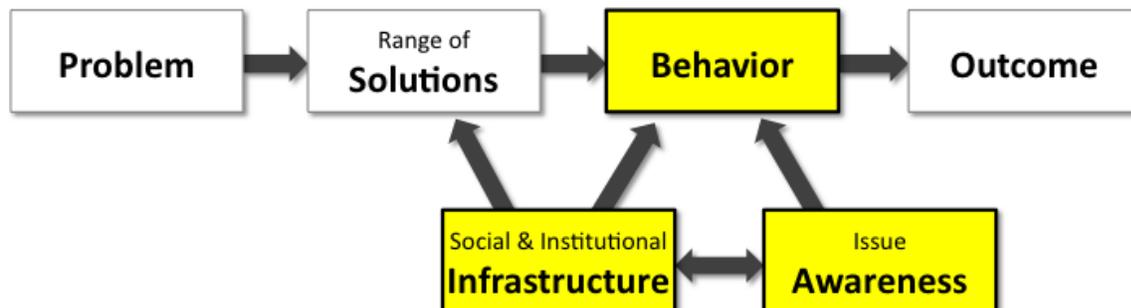


Ecosystem Monitoring Program (Draft, October 12, 2011)

Stewardship of Puget Sound resources by the region's 4.5 million residents is critical to the long-term recovery and protection of Puget Sound. Stewardship includes both fostering beneficial actions and reducing behaviors that damage the ecosystem. Public engagement is necessary to enhance collective positive impacts and reduce cumulative negative impacts that result in polluted water, degraded land and habitat, and imperiled species.

The regional approach to public stewardship of Puget Sound is a self-reinforcing three-pronged strategy:

- **Changing Practices and Behaviors**
- **Building Issue Awareness and Understanding**
- **Changing Social and Institutional Infrastructure**



Strategies under this approach are described in Strategy D2 - Changing Practices and Behaviors, Strategy D3 - Issue Awareness and Understanding, and Strategy D4 - Social and Institutional Infrastructure.

Changing practices and behaviors (D2) may mean a one-time action or it may mean making shifts in lifelong habits. It may be a contribution to a community effort or doing something a little differently at home. The common feature is that changing these specific practices and behaviors reduces or eliminates negative cumulative effects on ecosystem resources.

Issue awareness and understanding (D3) is needed among certain audiences or groups of people who have the capacity to institute and sustain desired changes. Issue awareness can create a social environment that supports beneficial practices and behaviors. It can also promote the development of the social and institutional infrastructure needed to implement specific actions and behaviors.

Social and institutional infrastructure (D4) consists of the social and communication networks we rely on to institute change. It also includes the social processes and procedures (e.g., services, utilities,

regulations) that influence the way people function every day. Social and institutional infrastructure affects the range of available solutions. It also limits or enables specific practices and behaviors, and influences how we build awareness and understanding of issues. It is the foundation that supports both awareness-building and targeted behavior change efforts.

This approach can be applied at a large scale such as long term health of the Puget Sound ecosystem, as well as smaller scales with more narrowly defined problems such as reducing nutrient loads from lawn fertilizer, increasing vegetation along streams, or eliminating bacterial contamination from septic systems.

This approach challenges those working to recover the Puget Sound ecosystem to go beyond traditional approaches to education, public information, and behavior change. It calls for a deeper understanding, including formative research, of the practices we need to influence and the specific audiences, motivators, and barriers behind those practices. It encourages innovation, challenges assumptions, and seeks clear chains of results that can be reproduced.

D4. Build social and institutional infrastructure that fosters beneficial practices and behaviors and removes institutional barriers to those practices

“Social Infrastructure” consists of the social constructs people use to solve problems, make community decisions, and accomplish complex tasks. The dominant components are in the social, communication, and trust networks that enable society to get things done. These are referred to in social science as “Social Capital”. Social capital consists of the bonds that bring groups of people and organizations together, and the bridges that connect those groups.

Social capital is found in a variety of places and forms. It is commonly embodied in community, professional, religious, sports, and recreational organizations. It appears in many social settings, formal and informal. Social capital is also found in social networks created specifically to address Puget Sound issues, including the Puget Sound Partnership’s ECO-Net communications network, the STORM coalition of municipalities, and the non-profit environmental caucus.

Social capital, when measured, correlates to a variety of social indicators including educational achievement, school performance, crime rates, health, infant mortality, civic participation, economic equality, and social tolerance. Social capital also correlates to a society’s ability to solve complex problems – including environmental problems. As such, social capital is a key part of the social infrastructure needed to recover and maintain Puget Sound’s health.

Whereas social infrastructure consists of the networks people rely on to get things done, “Institutional Infrastructure” consists of the processes, procedures, and physical tools that people use to get things done.

Institutional infrastructure is a suite of things, public or private, which enable, motivate, or impede desired actions or behaviors. In Social Marketing terms, these are often the things that form motivators or barriers to desired actions. While the words “institutional infrastructure” may seem to suggest government agencies and public works projects, it actually includes a variety of tools, public and private, large and small.

For example:

- The ability of community-based restoration groups to replant shoreline buffers depends on an infrastructure of native plant nurseries.
- The ability of volunteer groups to help restore Puget Sound may be limited by a simple lack of loaner shovels.
- The ability of farmers and pet owners to better manage animal waste may be limited by a lack of appropriate disposal options.
- The ability of homeowners and builders to reduce impervious surfaces may be impeded by antiquated municipal engineering design and development standards.

Social and institutional infrastructure strongly influences the ability of residents to make changes in behavior and practices. It affects the range of solutions available to people and ability of people to take action.

Social and institutional infrastructure can make it easier for people to make better individual stewardship decisions, or it can make it harder. Building effective communication and decision networks, and removing barriers to action, enables personal and community action.

- D.4.1 Apply appropriate social science relative to Puget Sound recovery to identify targeted actions, audiences, opportunities, strategies, and evaluation metrics.**
- D.4.2 Build capacity among partner organizations so they can promote beneficial practices and behaviors and build issue awareness and understanding. Provide technical support and training to partners to support program effectiveness, evaluation, and connection to Action Agenda priorities.**
- D.4.3 Develop and maintain communications infrastructure (e.g., MyPugetSound.net) to effectively collaborate, coordinate, and share information among partner groups.**
- D.4.4 Develop and maintain the organizational capacity and infrastructure for a sustained regional public communication effort to Puget Sound residents.**
- D.4.5 Provide easy-to-access public information conduits to connect individuals to local activities and resources related to education, volunteerism, and stewardship.**
- D.4.6 Enhance and sustain strategic networks to increase collaboration, build long-term sustainability, align efforts, improve messaging, and share results of ongoing work: including ECO-Net, STORM, tribes, municipalities not covered by stormwater permits, public agencies, funders, and NGO's.**
- D.4.7 Evaluate and align social drivers, remove barriers (e.g., physical, economic, regulatory, enforcement, policy), provide incentives, and provide technical guidance to enable residents and communities to adopt beneficial practices and behaviors.**
- D.4.8 Foster the development of a distributed network of partners. Promote the development of bonds among priority groups. Advance the development of strategic bridges between key groups.**
- D.4.9 Encourage and enhance the social capital necessary for the diffusion of beneficial practices and long-term place-based cultural development (communities, associations, watershed councils, individuals, households, and third places, for example).**

D.4.10 Enable partner organizations to provide opportunities for facilitated action on the part of residents and communities (e.g. community projects, incentive programs, one-on-one technical assistance, and volunteer experiences). Increase resources to support stewardship actions among residents, communities and targeted groups.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

- Local organizations are actively coordinate and collaborate, locally and regionally, to increase consistency and coverage, share knowledge and resources, and enhance effectiveness and efficiency of individual programs.
- Local organizations are using and enhancing existing social, informational and institutional networks to increase collaboration, expand partnerships and disseminate effective awareness and stewardship strategies.
- Puget Sound Partnership is providing training for partners on effective tools and techniques for behavior change programs, such as social marketing, diffusion, program development, new technologies, and program evaluation.
- Puget Sound Partnership and funding partners are securing funding to support local and regional stewardship efforts. The funding is being used to promote innovation, regional program alignment, collaboration, improved implementation of targeted strategies, and connections with new audiences to advance recovery efforts.
- Puget Sound Partnership and local partners are maintaining and enhancing ECO-Net, a sound-wide network that builds and strengthens relationships among Puget Sound organizations working on social strategies.

Near Term Action Proposals

D4. NTA 1: Puget Sound Partnership develops a map of the Puget Sound partner network to identify gaps, identify bonding and bridging opportunities, and build understanding of the roles the various partners play in Puget Sound recovery.

D4. NTA 2: Puget Sound Partnership develops and implements an ongoing Sound Behavior Index to assess environmental social capital and track long-term shifts in behaviors and practices across the Puget Sound region.

D4. NTA 3: Municipal stormwater permittees develop and implement a strategic business and funding plan for the STORM coalition (Stormwater Outreach for Regional Municipalities) to ensure the long-term sustainability of the coalition and its activities.

D4. NTA 4: Puget Sound Partnership, STORM, and Department of Ecology align behavior change programs implemented by NPDES stormwater discharge permit holders to coordinate stormwater program methods and messages, fill gaps in program coverage, remove redundant coverage, and provide incentives for municipal permittees to participate in regional programs such as STORM.

D4. NTA 5: Puget Sound Partnership and grantee(s) establish a Citizen Action Training School, based on the prior Puget Sound Water Quality Authority-funded pilot program,

strengthening civic structures and processes, so that residents become fully engaged representatives of their communities on issues related to Puget Sound health.

D4. NTA 6:

Puget Sound Partnership establishes protocols to monitor, measure, and evaluate the effectiveness of public awareness and stewardship efforts region-wide.