

## Comments – Dec. 9 2011 Draft Action Agenda – Strategy D4 – Science and Monitoring

2/7/12 – Pete Dowty

### General Comments:

- Science and monitoring are critical to the goals for Puget Sound protection and restoration and it is reassuring to see them explicitly addressed.
- This section D4 needs to provide a clear statement of the vision for monitoring in Puget Sound recovery and its role in the Action Agenda. This is currently missing. This statement should include at least two components: (1) Explanation of the critical role of monitoring overall in the *programmatic* adaptive management that is the core organizing principal of the Puget Sound recovery and protection effort; (2) Explanation of how this section of the Action Agenda relates to the various, specific monitoring activities listed in the first three sections of the Action Agenda (Upland and Terrestrial; Marine and Nearshore; Reduce and Control Sources of Pollution).
- This section is written from a perspective that is inconsistent with other sections of the draft Action Agenda. Other sections rely on active language (“protect”, “reduce”, “prevent”) that reflects a direct relationship to actions to be led by many entities in the Puget Sound region. In contrast, this section uses language that reflects an indirect relationship to real actions that are needed (“convene”, “facilitate”, “oversee”, “coordinate”). This perspective also results in a lack of tangible near-term actions. This is unnecessary and does not satisfactorily reflect the critical actions that are needed in the areas of science and monitoring. For example, rather than “Convene and facilitate the implementation of...” (D4 introductory text), the strategy should be “Implement...” Similarly, while the biennial science work plan is appropriately categorized as an ongoing activity, it seems obvious that the update of this plan should be a near-term action with a performance measure. This would make this strategy more tangible and credible.
- “Strategic planning” is one of only two main strategies under science and monitoring. This is clearly considered to be important. But planning on a two-year cycle does not seem very strategic given the complexity of the human and ecological components of the system and the long-term time horizon of adaptive management of such a large, complex system. There is a need for true strategic planning that extends beyond the two-year time horizon, perhaps on a 5-10 year time horizon.

### Specific Comments:

D4 first sentence. Change “Convene and facilitate the implementation of...” to “Implement...”

#### D4.1

- Heading. Change “Oversee strategic planning” to “Conduct strategic planning”
- 1<sup>st</sup> sentence: insert “of the” before “Science Panel”.
- NTA: Add completion of the update of the Biennial Science Work Plan as an NTA.

D4.1.1 and D4.1.2. These sub-strategies, “build..[a]..base of scientific knowledge” and “expand a network of scientific expertise”, do not seem to fit under strategy D4.1 of strategic planning. Suggest adding a strategy D4.2 that is “Improve availability of policy-relevant scientific information” (and shifting

the existing D4.2 to D4.3). Strategy D4.1.2 does not convey anything meaningful. The ongoing activity of “facilitating collaboration among...” with no NTA’s is not worth including. It dilutes the focus of the section overall. This should be deleted or transformed into a strategy with explicit NTAs.

#### D4.2.1

- 1<sup>st</sup> sentence starts “PSP staff is responsible for....” This paragraph should describe what the new regional monitoring program is responsible for, not what PSP staff is responsible for. This is not a work plan for PSP staff. Replace the first sentence with something like the following drawn from the monitoring program charter: “The Monitoring Program will coordinate the work of existing and future monitoring efforts to assess the effectiveness of recovery actions, evaluate progress towards ecosystem recovery and inform decision-making through adaptive management to achieve the goals of the Action Agenda.”
- Ongoing activities – “Staffing committees...”. This again reflects the perspective of PSP staff and not the broader perspective that is called for, in this case the perspective of the regional monitoring program. Replace with something like “Commission workgroups and provide guidance and oversight to their activities”.
- NTAs. Add NTAs that reflect the work of the monitoring program. These could include “commission initial workgroups”, “complete guidance document to direct the effort of the workgroups”, “complete a workplan for the monitoring program steering committee”.

#### D4.2.2

- Heading: replace “Lead efforts to compile, manage....” With “Compile, manage....”
- Ongoing activities: change language for each activity to be more direct. For example, the first one should be changed from “work with partners to provide data....” To “Provide data....”
- There are obvious NTA’s for this sub-strategy that should be listed. For example, “update vital sign indicators”, “finalize guidelines for data quality and management”, “Complete State of the Sound report”.