



SECTION 3:
STRATEGIES AND
ACTIONS TO RECOVER
PUGET SOUND TO
HEALTH

Strategies and Actions to Recover Puget Sound to Health

This section presents a complete picture of Puget Sound recovery including strategies and sub-strategies, ongoing activities, and near-term actions. The strategies and sub-strategies are intended to be durable, and will be adapted as needed.

How are the Strategies and Actions Organized?

The Action Agenda is made up of strategies, sub-strategies, ongoing program activities, and near-term actions.

Strategies and actions are organized into five broad categories:

- A. **Freshwater and Terrestrial Protection and Restoration**, which includes strategies and actions related to land development and restoration, stewardship of working forest and agriculture lands, floodplains, salmon recovery, and freshwater flows;
- B. **Marine and Nearshore Protection and Restoration**, which includes strategies and actions related to shoreline protection, alteration, and restoration; marine area protection and restoration; working waterfronts and public access; and biodiversity and invasive species;
- C. **Pollution Prevention and Cleanup**, which includes strategies related to reducing toxic threats, polluted runoff from urban and rural lands, wastewater management, shellfish bed restoration, oil spill preparedness, and clean up;
- D. **Strategic Leadership and Collaboration**, which includes much of the core work of the Puget Sound Partnership agency, as well as some partners, including strategies related to setting priorities, performance management, science and ecosystem monitoring, and promoting stewardship;
- E. **Funding Strategy**, which describes how increased financial capacity to implement priority ongoing and new actions in the Action Agenda can be achieved through identifying new sources of funding, using existing funding more strategically and efficiently, and developing innovative, market-based programs.

In each category, strategies and sub-strategies describe the overall, long-term directions and approaches that are needed for Puget Sound protection and recovery. [Strategies and actions identified by local areas are](#) ~~Where identified, locally identified related strategies and actions are included at the strategy or sub-strategy level,~~ [included where available](#). Cross-cutting issues such as salmon recovery and climate adaptation are discussed throughout. Emerging opportunities and future considerations are also listed for strategies or sub-strategies as appropriate.

Ongoing program activities and near-term actions are nested under strategies and sub-strategies.

- **Ongoing activities** have been and continue to be the foundation for recovery efforts. All ongoing work that is related to Puget Sound recovery fits within the framework of the Action Agenda. The ongoing programs listed in the 2012 Action Agenda are mainly state agency programs. ~~The ongoing programs listed are examples.~~ ~~They are examples~~ and are not intended to be a complete inventory of all ongoing programs. Ongoing work must continue to be funded in order to achieve recovery goals. The Partnership will begin an evaluation of ongoing programs after the Action Agenda is adopted.
- **Near-term actions** are considered the “change agenda.” These are important new initiatives, critical next steps in ongoing work, and targeted efforts to improve implementation of ongoing programs or ensure these programs have adequate resources to deliver on their objectives.

Finally, **recovery target views** throughout this section describe each recovery target, the current status of the ecosystem relative to each target, and show the logic behind how we think the strategies and actions in the Action Agenda will lead to achievement of the targets. The target views are presented as graphical depictions of this thinking in the form of “results chains.” The results chains illustrate relationships between strategies and actions, pressures on the ecosystem, and ecosystem conditions. The Partnership has received feedback that the results are difficult to read and could be improved as a communication tool. Each target view includes a detailed explanation of how to read the diagrams. These diagrams can be improved in the future.

How Were the 2012 Strategies and Actions Developed?

As the recovery targets were emerging, work began to ensure the strategies and actions in the Action Agenda would make meaningful progress towards achieving recovery. Five interdisciplinary teams were formed to focus on developing and refining strategies and actions related to achieving the recovery targets for the focus pressures of: 1) land development, 2) loss of floodplain function, 3) shoreline alteration, 4) urban stormwater runoff, and 5) wastewater. These teams included representatives of the business, environmental, academic, and public interest communities; state and federal agencies; and Tribal governments. They met through the summer and fall of 2011 and used a process based on the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (<http://www.conservationmeasures.org/>) to develop strategies and actions, building from the 2008 Action Agenda and considering the guiding principles for ecosystem management in Puget Sound. Other strategy areas, such as oil spill preparedness and response, toxic cleanup, and invasive species, were assigned to staff leads who worked with standing or ad hoc groups to refine and update the existing strategies if and as needed. Well over 100 people participated in this process, which included upwards of 50 intensive meetings and discussions.

At the same time, updates to the local area strategies and actions were underway. This work both informed the Soundwide strategies and actions, and defined local priorities for and contributions to Puget Sound recovery. Over 30 meetings were held in local areas from June through September 2011.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT IN PUGET SOUND

Input from the topic forums and action area meetings in 2008 led to the development of the following principles for ecosystem management. The principles, refined by the Leadership Council, Science Panel, and Ecosystem Coordination Board, were used to develop the strategic priorities and actions. They were reviewed by the Science Panel in 2011 and reflect only modest addition related to human communities.

- A. Address threats and choose opportunities with the highest potential magnitude of impact.
 - B. Address threats with the highest level of urgency. (How imminent is the threat; will it result in an irreversible loss; how resilient are the resources that are affected?)
 - C. Use strategies that have a reasonable certainty of effectiveness and reflect a balanced precautionary and adaptive approach.
 - Actions should have a realistic expectation that they will be effective in addressing the identified threat.
 - Actions and decisions about the use of resources should err on the side of caution to avoid irreversible ecological consequences.
 - Actions should be designed so they can be measured, monitored, and adapted.
 - D. Use scientific input – about the importance, urgency, and reversibility of threats; opportunities for management impact; effectiveness of actions; and monitoring and adaptation – in designing, implementing, and evaluating strategies.
 - E. Use strategies that are cost effective in making efficient use of funding, personnel, and resources with realistic expectations of achieving results.
 - F. Address the processes that form and sustain ecosystems and increase ecosystem resiliency rather than focus narrowly on fixing individual sites. Consider the Salish Sea ecosystem perspective.
 - G. Attempt to address threats at their origin instead of reacting after the damage has been done. Anticipate and prevent problems before they occur, and plan for extreme events. (With more people coming to the region and a changing climate, a proactive strategy is increasingly important.)
 - H. Consider the linkages and interactions among strategies.
 - Address multiple threats and their interactions with strategies that work together. We cannot afford to look at problems or develop solutions in isolation.
 - Watch out for unintended consequences. Evaluate strategies so actions to address one problem do not cause harm to other ecosystem processes, functions, and structure, as well as social and economic considerations.
 - Integrate salmon recovery actions with ecosystem management actions.
 - I. Account for the variations in ecosystem conditions and processes in different geographic areas of Puget Sound. Some parts of Puget Sound are fairly intact while others are severely degraded, and rebuilding strategies need flexibility to encompass regional differences. Ensure that no region or economic sector bears the entire brunt of the responsibility for implementing solutions.
 - J. Account for human communities and values as fundamental, central elements of the Puget Sound ecosystem (i.e., the Puget Sound social-ecological system).
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Public Review of the Draft Action Agenda

Subject-focused workshops ~~were held~~ on draft Action Agenda content ~~were held~~ in September 2011, attended by approximately 100 subject experts from a wide range of interests. Six public open houses were held around the Sound around the same time. The Ecosystem Coordination Board and Leadership Council were briefed on draft Action Agenda content in September, October, and November 2011 and the Draft Action Agenda Update was released for public review and comment on December 8, 2011.

Ninety comment letters were received during the public comment period that closed on February 3, 2012, and over 1,000 comments were received by email or post-card.

High-level concerns raised by commenters included:

- While the Partnership needed to “show their work” and logic behind the Action Agenda, the document was too long and should be simplified, shortened, and focused on clear priorities;
- The prioritization process described in the draft Action Agenda would mix ecological with other criteria and would not produce clear information for decision makers to use;
- Salmon recovery and salmon recovery actions should be more prominent;
- Links between strategies and actions and achievement of the 2020 recovery targets are not clear enough, and interim milestones to track progress towards recovery are needed;
- More integration of the Soundwide and local work is needed;
- Actions needed to be specific and include performance measures.

In addition, commenters offered numerous comments on specific sections and wording and on specific strategies, sub-strategies, near-term actions, and performance measures. A summary of responses to comments is available online (http://www.psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_2011_update_home.php).

The Partnership addressed the high-level concerns by creating the strategic initiatives and an Action Agenda Highlights document. Salmon recovery is prominently featured through the strategic initiatives and iconography throughout the Action Agenda. The work of the local integrating organizations advanced between the draft and final Action Agenda. Local strategies and actions, to the extent available and relevant, are woven throughout the strategies and sub-strategies. Local near-term actions with measures are included where available. The Partnership has added an action to develop ~~the~~ interim milestones ~~to track progress towards recovery targets~~.

~~As part of the Partnership’s performance management responsibilities, near-term actions will be tracked for implementation progress. The will help identify where additional regional support and resources are needed. It is not intended to grade implementers on their work. All near-term actions have one assigned owner, a completion date and performance measures. The Partnership is continuing to work with partners to identify measures that are strongly linked to progress in reaching the 2020 ecosystem targets. The monitoring of progress and performance management will continue to improve, yet we have made substantial strides in this document from the 2008 Action Agenda. As part of the Partnership’s performance management responsibilities, all near-term actions will be tracked for implementation progress. The intent of this effort is to help the region stay on track for recovery, and identify where additional regional support and resources are needed. It is not intended to grade implementers on their work. All near-term actions have one assigned owner, a completion date and performance milestones that are outcome-based, or output based wherever possible. The near-term~~

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~~actions and measures at the time the 2012 Action Agenda is adopted are a monumental step forward from 2008. Many of the measures and some of the actions will need refinement by June 2012, to ensure that performance measurement is meaningful for regional decision-making.~~

After the initial public comment on the Action Agenda, the Partnership made the revised draft Action Agenda available for additional public review in May and June 2012. This review was focused on identifying any refinements to near term actions (or additional actions) that might be needed. At the same time, subcommittees of the Ecosystem Coordination Board were working to identify the content of the three Strategic Initiatives. When this work was complete the Partnership made the final draft Action Agenda package, including the Strategic Initiatives, available for public comment in early July, 2012. [Placeholder for summary of the results of this final comment period]

SCIENCE IN THE ACTION AGENDA

After completion of the first Action Agenda in 2008, the Partnership, including the Science Panel, embarked on identifying and building more rigorous and systematic approach to future iterations of the Action Agenda. The Partnership adopted the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (The Conservation Measures Partnership, 2007) as the adaptive framework to use moving forward (Partnership's Strategic Science Plan (2010)).

The Open Standards process provides a common means of understanding and supporting the critical role of science, and a means to identify where in the project management cycle science is relevant and needed. Each step in the Open Standards process has scientific, performance and policy inputs. The choice of what actions to take and their priority and sequencing are ultimately policy choices. These choices are grounded in scientific information so that decision-makers can make the most informed decisions possible, and understand the certainty and uncertainties in their choices.

There are multiple other scientific inputs to the Action Agenda content and process, summarized in Appendix E.

In the 2008 Action Agenda, the Partnership recognized that climate change would need to be incorporated into future versions of the Action Agenda. For this update, the Partnership is working with the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group to set the Puget Sound region and the Action Agenda on a path for adapting our work in the face of a changing climate.

How is Climate Change Adaptation Incorporated into the Strategies and Actions?

Adapting to our changing climate means understanding how climate change may affect priority issues for the Partnership and using that knowledge to take steps that will reduce or avoid the negative

impacts of climate change, as well as seize opportunities that exist now. Adaptation is part of long-term risk management, not a one-time effort.

The Department of Ecology recently released *Preparing for a Changing Climate: Washington State's Integrated Climate Response Strategy* (April 2012). Adaptation steps reduce the vulnerability of human and natural systems, increase the capacity to withstand or cope with changes in climate, and transform the system to be compatible with likely future conditions. Many adaptation strategies are considered "no regrets" or "win-win" strategies because they address existing stresses on communities, economy, and environment while also helping reduce climate-related risks. In addition to the state strategy, there are local adaptation strategies that should be considered where relevant.

All of the Action Agenda strategies, sub-strategies, ongoing programs, and near-term actions are the "win-win" strategies and actions that help reduce existing stresses while reducing climate risks. They are similar to the strategies and actions outlined in state climate response. The state climate response strategies and actions are integrated into the 2012 Action Agenda as much as possible. Each strategy or sub-strategy of the Action Agenda contains a description of climate change impacts and related state strategies. Where possible now, a climate change adaptation step was included in near-term actions. Climate change next steps are included in the future opportunities and emerging issues for each strategy section. In the 2012 Action Agenda, a few near-term actions are specifically targeted at incorporating an adaptation need. For example, B2.3 NTA 1 Landowner Incentives for Landward Setbacks is designed to address both current shoreline armoring, as well as sea level rise. Action A5.1 NTA 4 Prioritization of State Highways with Floodplain Impacts specifically includes incorporating the Washington Department of Transportation *2011 Climate Impacts Vulnerability Assessment Report*.

Fully integrating climate change into the Action Agenda will require looking at the implications of a changing climate beyond 2020 for the long-term (e.g., 2050 and later), medium-term (2020) and near-term (2-3 years) goals and trajectories. For example, how will the definition of a "healthy Puget Sound" change in a changing climate? How will climate change alter how we measure and evaluate progress? We may need to refine value terms like "priority," "ecologically important," "sensitive," and "high value," as well as re-evaluate strategies that are based on existing policies, plans, and tools that may not include climate change considerations. In a region with high natural climate variability, we will need to recognize the impacts of climate fluctuations as well as change, to ensure appropriate approaches and metrics for planning and evaluation.

In *Preparing for a Changing Climate: Washington State's Integrated Climate Response Strategy* (April 2012), seven overarching high-priority climate change response strategies are identified.

1. **Protect people and communities from climate change impacts.** This includes enhancing core public health capacity and enhancing emergency response capacity to address increasingly extreme floods and fires.
2. **Reduce risk of damage to buildings, transportation systems, and other infrastructure.** This includes reducing flood damage by restoring floodplains and capturing more water, supporting local efforts to prepare for coastal flooding and storm surges, considering climate change impacts when siting new development and infrastructure, and planning for relocation if structures are damaged by floods or other impacts.

3. **Reduce forest and agriculture vulnerability to climate change impacts.** This includes enhancing surveillance and eradication of pests and disease, promoting identification of and transition to plant species that are resilient to new climate conditions, conserving productive and adaptive farmland and forests, and reducing forest and wildland fire risk in highly vulnerable areas.
4. **Improve water management to address climate-related supply reductions.** This includes promoting integrated water management in vulnerable basins, implementing enhanced water conservation and efficiency programs, ensuring sufficient cold water in salmon-bearing streams during critical seasons, and incorporating climate change realities into agency decision-making.
5. **Safeguard fish and wildlife and protect critical ecosystem services that support human and natural systems.** This includes protecting and restoring habitat and improving the ability of species to migrate to more suitable habitat as the climate shifts, protecting sensitive and vulnerable species and their habitats, and reducing existing stresses on fish, wildlife, plants, and ecosystems.
6. **Reduce the vulnerability of coastal communities, habitat, and species.** This includes preventing coastal habitat degradation and destruction and seeking opportunities for upland habitat creation as sea levels rise, and reducing shellfish vulnerability to ocean acidification by reducing land-based contributions of carbon and polluted runoff to the marine environment.
7. **Support the efforts of local communities and strengthen capacity to respond and engage the public.** This includes identifying existing and new funding mechanisms to support adaptation work at the local level, developing an institutional structure to improve coordination and support an integrated approach, supporting information gathering on climate impacts and ensuring scientific information is easily accessible, and engaging the public in determining appropriate responses to climate change.

Locally Developed Information in the Action Agenda

City and county governments will be the primary implementers of many of the priorities, strategies, and actions identified in the Action Agenda. Since 2008 with the development of the first Action Agenda, local areas have been working toward both a structure and an approach to implement, as well as integrate, local community efforts to advance the Action Agenda. The Partnership has supported local areas to form what are called, “local integrating organizations” (LIOs) and have had these LIOs recognized by the Leadership Council. These LIOs have helped to update the Action Agenda by more clearly articulating local information, priorities, and actions. By April 2012, LIOs have been established in 8 out of 10 local areas in Puget Sound.

Throughout 2011 and early 2012, Partnership staff worked closely with each local area to

Locally Developed Information in the Action Agenda

develop an approach for identifying and prioritizing local strategies and actions that help to restore Puget Sound to health. The result of this work is portrayed in the 2012 Action Agenda in the following ways:

- An updated profile for each local area is included in the ‘How Local Areas Are Working to Protect and Recover Puget Sound?’ section of the Action Agenda. These profiles contain information on each area’s work to date to identify local ecosystem pressures and strategies and actions for addressing those threats.
- Information from the local areas was used by strategy conveners to help develop the Soundwide strategies in the 2012 Action Agenda. Local strategies that have been agreed upon or are in consideration are presented with the related Soundwide strategies or sub-strategies.
- For those LIOs that identified and prioritized near-term actions, these are listed with related Soundwide actions. Many local areas were not able to identify near-term actions at this time. This does not mean that actions and strategies are not important in these areas; instead it reflects the differences between the local area processes. Local near-term actions are indicated with a label that delineates the area, for example “HC” delineates Hood Canal.
- Most local areas identified scientific needs. These are included in the 2012 Biennial Science Work Plan (BSWP).

It is important to note that work is ongoing in all local areas. Each area is at a unique point in the process of identifying their priorities and contributing to the Action Agenda. Some areas have prioritized strategies and actions with performance measures, others are working to further refine content and add specificity around actions, while others are beginning to establish their LIO and define and prioritize strategies and actions. The table below provides an overview of the current status of each area as it relates to Action Agenda engagement.

LOCAL AREA	STATUS	LOCAL AREA	STATUS
Hood Canal	LIO developed; strategies and actions identified; undergoing prioritization and further refinement	South Central	LIO developed; strategies and actions identified and prioritized; undergoing further refinement
Island	LIO developed; starting to identify strategies and actions and discuss prioritization	South Sound	LIO developed; strategic initiatives identified; refining and prioritizing strategies and actions

Locally Developed Information in the Action Agenda

West Sound (North Central)	LIO in formation; strategies and actions identified; undergoing prioritization and further refinement	Stillaguamish/Snohomish	LIO developed; starting to identify strategies and actions
San Juan Islands	LIO developed; strategies and actions identified and prioritized; actions to be further defined	Strait of Juan de Fuca	LIO developed; strategies and actions identified and prioritized
Skagit	LIO in formation; starting to identify strategies and actions	Whatcom	LIO developed; refining strategies and actions

In the next two years, each local area will continue to move forward in defining priorities, implementing actions, and contributing to a cleaner, more vibrant, and community-oriented Puget Sound.

What Are the Priorities For Action?

RCW 90.71 requires PSP to prioritize actions necessary to recover Puget Sound. Clear priorities also are needed to direct allocation of increasingly scarce federal, state, and local resources. Based on feedback from the ECB and others in April, the prioritization process will be further refined and completed by July. However, broad support was expressed for three strategic initiatives which are listed below. The content of these initiatives will be developed along with the finalization of the prioritization process.

The three Strategic Initiatives are:

- **Prevention of pollution from urban stormwater runoff** – this is an immense challenge, and although we have many of the tools and technologies for stormwater, we need to make much fuller use of them if we are to stop contamination from flowing into the Sound;
- **Protection and restoration of habitat** – We must stop destroying habitat, protect what we have left and substantially restore the critical habitats that we have lost;
- **Recovery of shellfish beds** – shellfish harvesting is both a treaty right for tribes and a vital industry in our region. It is also a treasured tradition for countless northwest families. Shellfish health begins on land, through reduction of pollution from rural and agricultural lands and maintenance and repair of failing septic tanks.

Setting priorities involves balancing ecological, economic, and human-well being factors so that we are focused on actions that will make the greatest progress toward recovery for the time and resources spent. The three strategic initiatives encompass priority actions that address the most serious threats to Puget Sound health, and will improve human well-being and support economic development and job creation. The specific actions included within each strategic initiative ~~were~~ be drawn from the strategies and actions developed during the Action Agenda update process, ~~and~~ They will also be informed by high-level policy discussions such as the Governor's Shellfish Initiative, the ECB policy statement on stormwater, and the process to address shortcomings in the implementation of salmon recovery efforts identified by tribes and NOAA in 2011. They were developed by Subcommittees of the Ecosystem Coordination Board and reviewed and adopted by the Leadership Council.

The strategic initiatives are described in detail in the Action Agenda highlights document. Their content also is summarized in Section 2 of the Action Agenda. Finally symbols throughout the Action Agenda illustrate the sub-strategies and actions that are part of each strategic initiative.

Future Prioritization Efforts

In addition to establishing the 2012/2013 Strategic Initiatives, as part of this Action Agenda update, the Partnership has begun an effort to create a more systematic and replicable approach to prioritization, including creating a transparent, durable framework for the prioritization process – something that can be refined and used year after year if desired – and reaching out to technical experts to gather specific information on each near-term action to inform priority setting. The ambition of this priority setting process is that it will be explicitly information based, transparent, and replicable, and that it will help illustrate where gaps in knowledge or uncertainty are particularly relevant to our understanding of what various actions might achieve.

Following direction from the ECB, the Science Panel and staff developed a tool that would produce a ranking of Action Agenda sub-strategies based on their expected ecological impact. In February and early March 2012, the ECB agreed that two other kinds of criteria were important for prioritization but would not be included in calculating ranks of sub-strategies. These were protection of tribal treaty rights and implementation issues (e.g., availability of funding, infrastructure considerations, job creation, human well-being).

This process followed five well-established steps for decision support:

1. *Meet with decision makers to identify what is important in their decisions* – In February, Science Panel and staff scientists met twice with the ECB in facilitated meetings to identify key criteria for evaluating sub-strategies.
2. *Choose an analytical approach* – The Science Panel chose a well-established, simple but robust method that has been used many times to support environmental decisions in a variety of different settings.
3. *Determine how much different key criteria should influence decisions* – Agreeing on weights is an important step for decision makers. Because the ECB identified a suite of ecological outcomes (e.g., protection, restoration, reducing pressures, effects on multiple parts of the ecosystem) as

important, they asked the Science Panel to develop preliminary weightings for these. The Science Panel developed weightings for these and for strategic outcome criteria for ECB consideration.

4. *Collect information on the choices based on the key criteria* – The Partnership engaged 40 scientists nominated by the membership of the ECB in evaluating the 73 sub-strategies of the Action Agenda using the criteria developed by the ECB, Science Panel, and staff. Staff met with the scientists after receiving their survey data to discuss difficulties they encountered and to identify ways to resolve any data problems.
5. *Apply an analytic method to the information to develop rankings* – Data from the survey were incorporated in the analytical method to develop a score for each sub-strategy. Rankings of sub-strategies were based on this score.

Expected ecological impact, of course, is not the only factor that should be considered in setting priorities. The ECB emphasized in their discussions that information on the funding status and potential economic costs (or economic benefits), human well-being impacts, and implementability would also be needed for each sub-strategy to set responsible priorities. This information was gathered by a broadly distributed survey sent to the Ecosystem Coordination Board, State Caucus, Salmon Recovery Council, Business Caucus, Environmental Caucus, and tribes; forty-two people provided information in response to this survey and their responses were compiled.

The result of this effort was a preliminary ranked list of sub-strategies based on their expected ecological impacts, and accompanying information on economic, human well-being, and implementation issues. The ECB considered the preliminary list of ranked sub-strategies at their April 6 meeting. There was broad-based support for the effort to date and the goal of establishing a ranked list; however, participants were concerned that the scoring process had not left enough time for the science community to develop a common understanding of what each sub-strategy is intended to accomplish, and they noted some other more technical concerns. There was particular concern about creating a list that ranked sub-strategies across issue areas – that is, land development related sub-strategies with marine and nearshore strategies, with species recovery strategies, with stormwater and other pollution abatement and control strategies.

Despite these concerns, participants expressed strong support for continuing to work on the ranking effort to improve the quality of a final ranked list. [In response to this interest, the Partnership worked with the people who had participated in the initial ranking effort to make some initial revisions to the ranking tool to address concerns. Adjustments were made to the ratings for ecosystem pressures, discussions were held to ensure that those participating in the ranking had consistent understanding of the sub-strategies and what implementation of sub-strategies would mean, and the instructions for ranking were refined. After this effort, parts of the ranking effort were re-done. The results of this second ranking effort are included in the Action Agenda in Appendix G—.](#)

The Partnership will continue to work with the science community on the ranking process and will publish three lists of sub-strategies ranked based on expected ecological impact in this Action Agenda update. The information on economic, human well-being, and implementation issues gathered as part of this initial process will be compiled with the final ecological impact rankings so decision makers have all of the information in one place.

Using the Action Agenda to Drive Investment and Progress

The Action Agenda was created to drive investment and action. All of the work described is important and needed to protect and recover Puget Sound. At the same time, the Partnership recognizes the need to think practically about how work might be sequenced, both for maximum efficiency and because resources are scarce and declining. The Action Agenda should be used to guide decision making related to allocation of funding or other resources in the following way.

Focus on the Strategic Initiatives: Strategic initiatives are the highest priorities for 2012 and 2013. First consider whether the new or discretionary funding source can support an unfunded or partially funded priority regional or related local action in one or more of the strategic initiatives. Strategic initiatives are the top priority for funding and the allocation of other resources. Strategic initiatives should also guide the development of policy agendas.

Maintain Effective Ongoing Programs: The Action Agenda builds on the ongoing work of partners to protect and restore Puget Sound. Funding should not be reallocated away from those programs at this time. Following this Action Agenda Update, the Partnership will conduct an evaluation of ongoing programs in accordance with RCW 90.71.370, which may result in ongoing program funding recommendations.

Prioritize the Science Needed to Better Understand a Complex System: Ensure that the science needed to successfully implement priority actions is funded and implemented. First fund and implement the Biennial Science Work Plan.

Use the Lists of Sub-strategies Ranked Based on Ecological Criteria and Local Priorities as One Piece of Information for Decision Making: If the funding source or other resource cannot be used to support implementation of a strategic initiative, refer to the ranked list of sub-strategies and related implementation information that will be completed in summer 2012. (The list is not available now.) Extract the sub-strategies eligible for funding by the source in question and generally fund near-term actions or local actions related to the highest ranked sub-strategies first except where implementation information or local priorities may be used to justify funding actions related to lower-ranked sub-strategies.

How Will the Action Agenda be improved in the Future?

The Action Agenda is a living document. Future updates will build on lessons learned and strengthen our shared responsibility to protect and recover Puget Sound. Our ongoing work to strengthen the Action Agenda and the Partnership includes:

- Science basis
 - Complete a risk analysis for Puget Sound that identifies the highest risks in geographic areas.

- Establish quantitative links between actions and recovery targets, including a better understanding of the strengths of the relationships between individual actions, predicted results, and anticipated changes in the ecosystem.
 - Continue integration and increase emphasis on climate change adaptations, since taking action now reduces the costs of current and future climate impacts.
- Priority setting
 - Refine the ecological ranking process and develop a process to integrate ecological, community, and economic criteria into a prioritization method.
 - Continue and increase specificity on local priorities and actions.
- Program and action effectiveness
 - Complete a more rigorous evaluation of strategy effectiveness, ongoing programs, new actions. This work eventually will include the ability to discuss investment priorities that span ongoing programs and new work and better identify interim milestones towards achievement of targets.
- Performance management
 - Set interim target milestones. This work will begin in 2012.
 - Continue refinement of near-term action definitions and measures of progress to be outcome based.
- Engagement of business and private-sector interests
 - Continue innovation in developing market-based solutions and funding beyond government sources.
 - Cultivate business and philanthropic partnerships.
 - Further engage farmers and other key stakeholders.