

EPA NEP Funding: Lead Organization Approach to Early Round 1 Investment

Context

In February, EPA awarded \$12 million through cooperative agreements to Lead Organizations (LOs). LOs are tasked with leading and providing implementation funding for six-year strategies in the following four areas of emphasis:

- Toxics and nutrients prevention, reduction and control (LO - Department of Ecology)
- Pathogen prevention, reduction, and control (LOs - Departments of Health and Ecology)
- Watershed protection and restoration (LOs - Departments of Ecology and Commerce)
- Marine and nearshore protection and restoration (LO - Department of Fish & Wildlife and DNR)

In addition, both the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) have cooperative agreements with EPA. PSP funding is focused on regional engagement and Action Agenda management. NWIFC funding is to provide sub-awards to 19 Federally-recognized Indian Tribes located within the greater Puget Sound Basin, and any authorized consortium of these eligible Tribes to implement high priority projects identified in the PSP's Action Agenda, or other existing recovery plans or which will contribute directly to the restoration and protection of Puget Sound.

The LOs intend to work with EPA and PSP to develop, manage and implement the six-year strategies in concert with the Action Agenda. Both the strategies and the Action Agenda will be concurrently refined throughout 2011. The six-year strategies and the Action Agenda will be the key funding drivers for LO investments. LOs will work with the Puget Sound Leadership Council to ensure alignment between the strategies and the Action Agenda.

LOs are initiating the recruitment of "strategic advisors" to provide direction on development of the strategies and to ensure they reinforce and implement the Action Agenda.

The LOs are advancing some early implementation investments in April. The remaining "Round 1" funds will be awarded in the summer of 2011 through RFPs and additional direct awards.

Rationale for Early Investment

- a) Implement high priority actions that advance the Action Agenda.
- b) Begin piloting process between EPA, PSP, LOs and management conference (i.e., ECB, Science Panel and Leadership Council).
- c) Demonstrate to Congress the need for urgent action in Puget Sound.

Watershed Protection and Restoration

Two early implementation projects totaling ~\$145k

1) Improve Stormwater Investments: ~\$20k to PSP

Action Agenda priority C.2.2.7 / Biennial Science Work plan 2.2.2

Project would review and improve upon existing state criteria for funding stormwater grants. The state has invested more than \$100 million in stormwater over the past two biennia. The governor has proposed another \$40 million for 2011-13. Ensuring any new funds are strategically invested is critical for the Action Agenda. PSP would conduct a review of recent project funding awards, confer with experts and develop recommendations to improve criteria for the anticipated 2011-2013 grant program.

2) Develop Project List for Stormwater Retrofits: ~\$125k to Puget Sound Regional Council

Action Agenda priority C.2.2.7 / Biennial Science Work plan 2.2.2

Project would engage four most urban Puget Sound counties to scope a larger effort that would develop a prioritized stormwater retrofit project list. PSP has estimated it would cost between \$3 billion and \$16 billion for stormwater retrofits in the basin. There is clearly a need to prioritize projects to better demonstrate the funding need and to invest limited dollars strategically. A project list could also be used to encourage public-private partnerships to fund and implement the projects. The project will build on existing EPA grant work and serve as template for other Puget Sound local governments.

Toxics and Nutrients Prevention, Reduction and Control

Three early implementation projects totaling \$576,573

1) Improve Fish Consumption Rates: \$100k to NW Indian Fisheries Commission

Action Agenda priorities C1.1 and NTA C1.2 / Biennial Science Work Plan NA

Project will develop a fish consumption rate that is acceptable to tribes for development of water quality criteria for toxics. Washington's current fish consumption rate of 6.5 grams per day is too low. By comparison, Oregon is increasing its rate to 175 grams per day. A higher fish consumption number lowers the allowable concentration of toxics in effluent limits of water quality permits. The fish consumption rate links to the water quality standards, TMDLs, toxic clean ups and permits for wastewater treatment plants, stormwater, and industries.

2) Develop Safer Alternatives Assessment Methodology & Guidance: \$150k targeted RFP

Action Agenda priorities C.1.1.2 and C.1.1.4 / Biennial Science Work plan 2.2.2

Project will conduct a stakeholder process to develop guidance on safer alternatives assessment methodology and to test that methodology by conducting an assessment on a selected chemical. There is increasing public concern about toxic chemicals in everyday consumer products that contribute toxic loadings to Puget Sound. There is a need to find safer alternatives to toxic chemicals in products and to encourage manufacturers to replace toxics in products with safer alternatives. The state needs to develop guidance on what this means and how assessments are to be done.

3) Address High-priority Stormwater Toxics Needs: \$326,573 to Washington Stormwater Center

Action Agenda priorities C.1.1.7 and C.2.2; NTA C.2.6 / Biennial Science Work plan 2.2.2

Project will utilize the Washington Stormwater Center's stormwater BMP facility to characterize toxics control options. Little information exists on effective mechanisms for controlling toxics in stormwater

runoff, yet stormwater contributes the majority of toxics to streams, rivers, and Puget Sound. WSC will identify specific technologies or other activities that control and manage toxics in stormwater. Extensive work already is underway at the Stormwater Center to characterize control technologies and LID approaches. This work will inform management activities carried out under stormwater permits issued under the Clean Water Act.

Pathogen Prevention, Reduction and Control

Three early implementation projects totaling \$378k

1) Prevent/Reduce Loads from Commercial and/or Recreational Vessels (a.k.a., No Discharge Zone petition): \$100k targeted competitive RFP through Ecology

Action Agenda priorities C.1.2.5 / Biennial Science Work Plan NA

Project will develop an initial assessment to evaluate whether some or all of the Puget Sound should be declared a No Discharge Zone. Specifically, this work includes researching petition requirements, gathering information for the petition from existing sources, preparing surveys for additional information, and beginning stakeholder outreach. Commercial and recreational boating is prevalent in Puget Sound and these activities can contribute to water quality problems. The Clean Water Act exempts marine sanitation devices (boat toilets or heads) discharges from regulation. A successful No Discharge Zone petition would prohibit vessel discharges in all or part of Puget Sound.

2) Fully Fund BEACH Program for High Risk Beaches: \$78k to local governments via Ecology

Action Agenda priorities C.6.2 and NTA C.6.1 / Biennial Science Work Plan NA

Project will fund weekly bacterial monitoring and public notification (if health risks are identified) to 20 high use beaches during the summer season. There are 70 beaches in Washington that are considered "high risk" for illnesses from fecal bacteria pathogens. Inadequate funding since 2000 has resulted in the discontinuation of water quality monitoring from 20 high risk beaches. This project would fully fund all 70 beaches. Increased monitoring and public notification should reduce health risks to public and is a critical element of the pollution identification and correction (PIC) process.

3) Scope and Phase Upgrades to DOH Shellfish & Water Protection Data System: \$200k to DOH

Action Agenda priorities D.3 and NTA D.3.7 / Biennial Science Work Plan NA

Project will upgrade the Office of Shellfish and Water Protection (OSWP) data system for managing, analyzing, and reporting water quality data and determining classification of the state's shellfish growing areas. Throughout Puget Sound, OSWP collects over 10,000 routine marine water systems per year as well as additional special marine samples during flood events, etc. The existing database and mapping systems are archaic and have limited capacity for trend analysis. This project upgrades the database and GIS platforms to improve data accessibility for stakeholders, increase trend analysis capacity for more efficient use of staff resources, better conditional area management, and use of sub-recipient data.

Marine and Nearshore Protection and Restoration

Early implementation projects are under development at this time.

