

Approach to Establishing Report-Level Indicators
Leadership Council Presentation and Discussion
April 29-30, 2008

Purpose

- To seek input and guidance from the Leadership Council on an approach to establishing report-level indicators of ecosystem health.
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Overview

One of the first steps to developing the Puget Sound Monitoring Program (Monitoring Program) is to establish a short list of ecosystem indicators that can be used to track and report progress towards the achievement of the Partnership's goals for a healthy Puget Sound by 2020 (report indicators). The report indicators will be a subset of the large list of indicators identified by a team of scientists led by NOAA. Once the report level indicators are identified, targets and interim benchmarks for each indicator will be identified.

Process For Selecting Report Indicators

NOAA is in the process of developing a comprehensive list of indicators that could be used to measure the health of Puget Sound. Once NOAA's provisional list is available, the Partnership must select a shorter list of indicators that will provide evidence that implementation of the Action Agenda is resulting in achievement of ecosystem goals. These report indicators will be used to communicate rates of success in achievement of Partnership goals to elected officials, Partnership leadership, partner entities and the public.

The selection process for the report indicators will require the use of a set of criteria. Proposed criteria (based on research into other national and regional indicator reporting efforts) for report indicators are provide below:

- ***Easy to understand***: Report indicators should be readily understandable by the general public.
- ***Of value***: Report indicators reflect an aspect of environmental or socio-economic quality that is of value to the general public.
- ***Long term***: Report indicators should show trends and changes over time.
- ***Has potential to influence decisions***: Report indicators should be compelling enough to trigger adjustments to management activities.
- ***Interpretation and utility***: Report indicators should describe the condition of the ecosystem relative to strategic and tactical approaches.
- ***Scale***: Report indicators should be capable of addressing both local and sound-wide conditions.

- ***Known baselines or current targets:*** To be most useful, report indicators should be quantifiable so that clear targets and benchmarks can be established.
- ***Relationship to goals:*** Each ecosystem goal should be addressed by at least one indicator keeping in mind that any one indicator can address more than one goal.

Most "State of the Sound" indicator reports have 20 or fewer indicators.

Once criteria have been established, Partnership staff will assist the Science Panel to present a draft list of report indicators, along with recommendations for indicator targets and interim benchmarks, to the Leadership Council. It is expected that this work will be available for Leadership Council preliminary review at the July meeting and final consideration after the August 7 Science Panel meeting.