

Monitoring Governance Agenda Item #8

Prepared by: Scott Redman

Approved

Presented by: Scott Redman

Proposed Action: Decision

Summary: The Partnership is one of many Puget Sound organizations with a need to collect and analyze information about the Puget Sound ecosystem. The Partnership and many of other stakeholders have expressed an interest in reforming the current approach to ecosystem monitoring with the vision that more meaningful and useful data to guide decision-making can be developed with current levels of investment.

As described in Action Agenda strategy E.3.1, and section 3.1.1 of the Biennial Science Work Plan, a priority near-term action of the Partnership is to develop a coordinated regional ecosystem-monitoring program to allow the Partnership to evaluate progress toward ecosystem recovery and adapt management strategies. The specific monitoring and reporting activities to be carried out by this program are not yet designed, but the program will include efforts to evaluate and report on:

- the status and trends of ecosystem conditions,
- the effectiveness of management actions, and
- cause-effect relationships among ecosystem components and management interventions.

The Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium, a stakeholder group that has been meeting since 2007, has evaluated best practices for organizing a coordinated ecosystem monitoring program and has recommended that the Partnership adopt, by mid-2009, one of two models for governing Puget Sound ecosystem monitoring and then transition to the new program.

Staff Recommendation: The Partnership should proceed to establish a coordinated ecosystem-monitoring program at the Partnership by the steps suggested by the Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium. Specifically, the Leadership Council should direct Partnership staff to coordinate with stakeholders to:

1. Establish a steering committee to oversee and ensure stakeholder engagement in the program.
2. Hire a monitoring program coordinator to shepherd program development. Hire additional staff as needed to develop the program.

3. Establish and commission a technical committee and topic-specific technical work groups to evaluate monitoring program needs and develop coordinated study designs and implementation approaches.

Background: The Monitoring Consortium discussed its recommended monitoring governance options with the Science Panel in April and December 2008. The Science Panel advised the Leadership Council that either of two recommended governance models could work if implemented well.

The Monitoring Consortium's recommendations were briefly discussed at February and March 2009 Leadership Council meetings and Leadership Council members expressed an interest in advancing a coordinated monitoring program by deciding at its May 2009 meeting on next steps for program development.

Stakeholders have discussed preferred approaches and next steps at a March 2009 meeting of the Monitoring Consortium's Governance Committee and at the April 2009 meeting of the Ecosystem Coordination Board. Information on the stakeholder perspectives is provided in attached material from the Monitoring Consortium. Representatives of local governments and environmental groups have expressed preferences for a coordinated program established at an independent institute. Representatives of state agencies and tribal governments have expressed preferences for a coordinated program at the Partnership. Monitoring Consortium members agree that either model could work if implemented well and encouraged the Partnership to decide on an option and proceed to develop a coordinated program.

Analysis: The Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium was established by the 2007 Legislature in recognition that a more coordinated approach to ecosystem monitoring would improve the focus, cost-effectiveness, and products of public and private investments in ecosystem monitoring. The Consortium researched examples from elsewhere in the U.S. of coordinated ecosystem monitoring programs that might accomplish the Legislature's interests. Evaluating these example approaches in the context of the Puget Sound Partnership and existing monitoring arrangements in the region, the Consortium developed two models of governance for a coordinated monitoring program. The two models are described in the Consortium's December 2008 report to the Legislature, and are very briefly summarized in the attached executive summary of that report.

As the Partnership leads the transition to a coordinated regional monitoring program, new governance arrangements are needed to ensure the engagement and equitable contribution of all parties that invest in relevant ecosystem monitoring. Both of the models described by the Consortium will improve coordination among the entities that collect the data and provide for more cross-topic synthesis and analysis of environmental data. The models have the support of regional stakeholders, including local governments, state and federal agencies, tribes, business associations, and environmental groups.

The Consortium's report provides insights about governance models that the Partnership can use to evaluate and balance the implications of various governance arrangements on management-monitoring connections, the independence of scientific investigation and reporting, and the ability to leverage and coordinate monitoring investments from a diversity of entities. A May 15 letter from the Monitoring Consortium (attached) provides additional information about key next steps and expectations for developing a coordinated monitoring program.

Next Steps: The Leadership Council's action today could authorize next steps as described in attachment #1 of the Monitoring Consortium's May 15 letter, including:

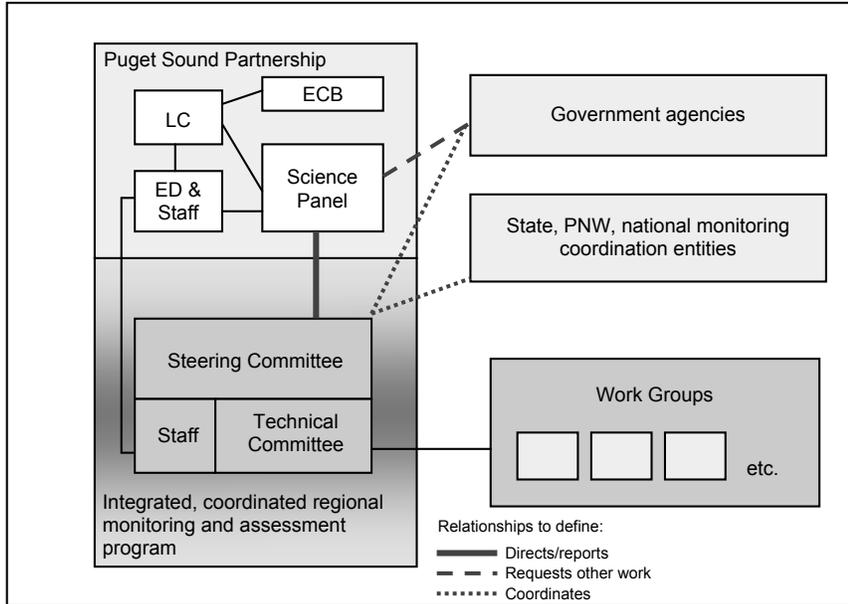
1. Establish steering committee or proto board and hire one new Partnership staff person to shepherd program development.
2. Establish technical committee and commission, support, and coordinate the efforts of work groups to describe and implement topic-specific approaches to coordinated monitoring.
3. Depending on governance approach selected by the Leadership Council:
 - a. For an independent institute: Hire interim staff. Define roles and relationships and develop institutional documents (articles of incorporation, bylaws), cost-sharing arrangements, and work plans. As needed and desired, develop and engage stakeholder support for legislation to authorize and help fund the institute.
 - b. For a program at the Partnership: Hire additional staff. Define roles and relationships and develop institutional documents (charters, bylaws), cost-sharing arrangements, and work plans. Develop budget requests to help fund the program in FY11 and later.

Attachments:

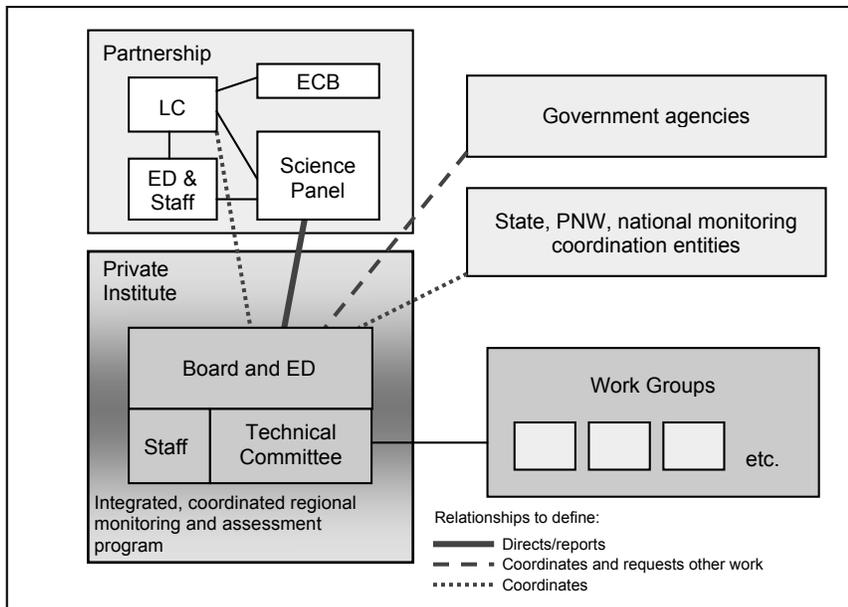
- Executive summary of the Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium's December 2008 report to the Legislature
- Proposed organizational structures – graphic from the Consortium's December 2008 report to the Legislature
- May 15, 2009 letter with attachments to Puget Sound Partnership from the Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium

PUGET SOUND MONITORING CONSORTIUM

PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE TWO GOVERNANCE MODELS



State Agency-Based Program Housed at the Partnership



Independent Private Institute

LC = Leadership Council; ECB = Ecosystem Coordination Board; ED = Executive Director; PNW = Pacific Northwest

PUGET SOUND MONITORING CONSORTIUM

OUR DIRECTIVE FROM THE LEGISLATURE

The Washington State Legislature in 2007 directed the Department of Ecology to “facilitate the development of an ongoing monitoring consortium similar to Chesapeake Bay or San Francisco Bay to institute coordination between local, state, and regional monitoring agencies. The goal is to integrate ongoing monitoring efforts for stormwater, water quality, watershed health, and other state indicators and enhance monitoring efforts in Puget Sound.”

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PUGET SOUND PARTNERSHIP AND THE WASHINGTON FORUM ON MONITORING SALMON RECOVERY AND WATERSHED HEALTH

During the same session, the Legislature created both the Puget Sound Partnership, with broad monitoring duties and responsibilities related to Puget Sound ecosystem recovery, and the Washington Forum on Monitoring, with statewide monitoring coordination and oversight duties. The Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium has been providing recommendations and briefings to the Partnership, and briefing the Forum on its activities and recommendations.

OUR MEMBERS

The Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium is a diverse group of motivated and engaged stakeholders representing approximately 40 local, state, federal, tribal, private and non-profit entities that share the common goal of coordinated, efficient data collection and efficient access to meaningful and credible environmental data for the Puget Sound basin. Our recommendations for, and our accomplishments toward, forming an integrated, coordinated monitoring and assessment program for the Puget Sound basin follow.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Consortium recommends the Legislature fully support and contribute to funding a coordinated, integrated regional monitoring and assessment program to more effectively and cost-efficiently achieve federal, state, and local environmental mandates and goals, including Puget Sound ecosystem recovery.

Our specific recommendations are:

1. Determine the organizational structure: Before June 30, 2009, the Partnership should formally review the Consortium’s governance recommendations, which include two possible organizational models, and decide what governance structure will house the ecosystem recovery monitoring program and the key functions to coordinate, integrate, and manage a regional monitoring and assessment program as an element of the Partnership’s regional science program.
2. Provide capacity and resources: For the 2009-2011 biennium and the long-term, to ensure the success and sustainability of the coordinated, integrated regional monitoring and assessment program, the Consortium specifically recommends:
 - For the 2009-2011 biennium the Legislature should contribute funding to adequately staff a successful transition to an integrated, coordinated regional monitoring and assessment program during the biennium. These staff will analyze science across topic areas from an ecosystem perspective and recommend meaningful prioritization and integration of ongoing monitoring and assessment efforts.
 - For the 2009-2011 biennium and the long-term, the Legislature should continue to provide ongoing funds to state agencies to support the basic monitoring and assessment activities that are the foundation of a regional program.

- In 2009-2011, the \$800,000 in state funds allocated for the Consortium's work should continue to support staff and projects related to ongoing Consortium activities, including the Stormwater Work Group and the Partnership's transition to and implementation of the integrated, coordinated monitoring and assessment program.
- The Partnership should initiate cost-sharing arrangements in 2009-2011 with local, state, federal, tribal, private, and non-profit groups to implement regional monitoring and assessment activities. The state's ongoing contribution will complement and enhance the contributions of other entities, and provide leadership to produce greater efficiencies as well as more meaningful data to support management decisions.

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Developed organizational models: The Consortium analyzed 17 programs from around the country and developed two organizational models. One model is a state agency-based structure housed at the Partnership; the other model is an independent private institute. Both proposals are built the same from the bottom up with topical work groups that are coordinated and integrated under an umbrella structure. Both models build on the existing Puget Sound Assessment and Monitoring Program (PSAMP), with agencies continuing to collect and analyze data.
- Established a work group for stormwater: The Consortium established the Stormwater Work Group comprised of 26 representatives of local, state, federal, tribal, private, and non-profit entities. This work group has begun identifying and prioritizing objectives and will create a regional stormwater monitoring and assessment strategy by June 2010. The strategy will be integrated with other regional efforts, such as status and trends monitoring for the Chinook recovery plan, and will inform the next cycle of municipal stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. This work group will be an ongoing activity, implementing the recommendations of the advisory committee that preceded the Consortium.
- Began pilot projects: The Consortium launched four projects to meet pressing needs for coordination and improved credibility of the monitoring data that is routinely collected in the Puget Sound region:
 - Develop standard operating procedures for automated sampling of stormwater and subsequent analysis of the data. Local jurisdictions currently have different methods for using the samplers and performing subsequent calculations, resulting in data sets that are not comparable. This project brings jurisdictions together to agree to and document common methodologies.
 - Standardize reporting methods and expand a database for stream benthos information that can be populated by all entities in Puget Sound that collect this information. The effort will improve data use and comparability.
 - Conduct inter-laboratory calibration activities to improve comparability of data and ensure consistency among laboratories in analyzing environmental data.
 - Expand an effort to establish performance and maintenance requirements for in-line ditch treatment methodologies for open stormwater conveyances. Most of the currently approved treatment methods require property purchases and significant capital investment by local jurisdictions. These new methods may provide significant water quality benefits in rural areas at reasonable cost to local governments.
- Provided technical assistance: The Consortium continues to provide the Partnership with an effective means for engaging experts and capacity in diverse areas of science related to ecosystem recovery.

PUGET SOUND MONITORING CONSORTIUM

David Dicks, Executive Director
Members of the Leadership Council
Members of the Ecosystem Coordination Board
Puget Sound Partnership
P.O. Box 40900, Olympia, Washington 98504-0900

May 12, 2009

Dear Leaders of the Puget Sound Partnership,

We are responding to the April 22nd letter from David Dicks and also following up on the Monitoring Consortium Governance Committee's March 25th meeting with three members of the Puget Sound Partnership's Leadership Council—Bill Ruckelshaus, Martha Kongsgaard and Bill Wilkerson—and the April 23rd discussion at the Ecosystem Coordination Board meeting. By this letter and its attachments we are providing information the Partnership has requested to assist it in deciding on a governance model for the coordinated monitoring and assessment program for Puget Sound. We understand that on May 27th or 28th the Leadership Council is expected to select one of the two governance models that the Consortium recommended to the Legislature and Partnership in our December 2008 report. We greatly appreciate your responsiveness to the Consortium's request for making a decision before the end of the biennium to facilitate a smooth, faster transition to a new coordinated monitoring approach.

Work Plan for Immediate Implementation: Scott Redman and Karen Dinicola have prepared a detailed work plan which is summarized in Attachment #1 to this letter. The first two tasks should be undertaken *now* to launch the program because they are not dependent on selection of the governance model. An oversight committee is needed to implement these first two tasks, and the Consortium staff and members will help the Partnership to convene it as soon as possible.

Near-Term Staffing Needs: In our report to the Legislature, at the bottom of page 18, we shared our findings that: "An integrated, coordinated monitoring program for Puget Sound would, over time, need a level of staffing comparable to programs elsewhere. Based on staffing levels of programs elsewhere, a minimum of about six to twelve dedicated employees is likely needed to start up the program, manage it, fully support the necessary functions, and provide continuity in the long term. The new program in Puget Sound can also rely on "loaned" staff from other jurisdictions and organizations." We recommended seven responsibilities or functions of these new dedicated staff for the new coordinated monitoring program, and highlight these in Attachment #2 to this letter.

In the long term, all of these functions must be included; however, our proposed work plan (Attachment #1) suggests starting with a single full-time "Lead Staff" person dedicated to starting up the coordinated monitoring program, and adding a second staff person in the second year of the program. These staff and the oversight committee will plan a ramp-up over time to fully support these seven functions. Written agreements with host agencies will be necessary to clarify expected contributions of "loaned" staff.

Start-up Cost Comparison: The Committee believes the start-up costs for the two programs are similar, unless it is determined that legislative authority is required or desirable to create a private institute, but not a program at the Partnership. If legislation is necessary, additional staff time must be devoted to draft language, engage stakeholder support, and shepherd the legislation through the 2010 session.

Operating Cost Comparison: To indicate a comparison of the operating costs of the two models, we cite an example of a similar size entity that is seeking to streamline its management of trust fund monies on behalf of its 16 member jurisdictions: A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH), an alliance for funding affordable housing, recently analyzed the impacts of converting ARCH's structure as supporting information to their proposal to become a non-profit corporation after having been a successful

intergovernmental partnership since its founding in 1992. Primarily because of additional legal costs, insurance, and auditing related to managing large contracts, it is estimated that ARCH's annual operating budget will increase from about \$500K to about \$520K to \$525K. So their operating costs will be about four to five percent more as a non-profit corporation than as a partnership of the jurisdictions. ARCH has strongly recommended the move to a non-profit corporation due to inherent inefficiencies in the partnership model.

Cost Savings and Efficiencies: A fundamental premise of the coordinated monitoring program is that it will be more cost-effective and efficient, but monitoring throughout Puget Sound needs to be expanded. Through coordination and collaboration, the region can attain a better value for the same investment, while leveraging resources to support the expansion. Coordination will reduce duplication of effort, thereby reducing costs while producing more effective and credible results. The Stormwater Work Group, which is now implementing its work plan to develop a regional monitoring strategy (see Attachment , is a means for demonstrating over the next year, and in subsequent years, that collaboration produces efficiencies and gets more "bang for each buck" that is invested in monitoring, and that some monitoring activities will cease in order to support the new regional program.

Funding Contributions: We discussed possible future contributions of local governments and others to the coordinated regional monitoring program and agreed that a thorough analysis of ongoing work is needed to recommend which programs to cut, which to scale back, which to continue, and which to add. This should be a first-year task of the new oversight committee and program staff to support developing the work plan for FY11 and beyond (see Attachment #1) and likely a supplemental budget request for the 2010 legislative session. These are not consensus recommendations; however we offer for future consideration that:

- A large portion of the funds spent by local jurisdictions and private industry on NPDES permit-required monitoring could be contributed to the regional program, relieving them of all or part of their individual monitoring responsibilities.
- The total budget of PSAMP could be considered in calculating the costs of monitoring and the funding of the regional program.
- Work groups will be established over time, beginning in a focused manner with a small number of existing efforts and their current funding arrangements, before expanding. These budgets could also be considered in calculating the costs and funding of the new program.

Pros and Cons: We understand that your Special Assistant, Tammy Owings, has forwarded to all of you the March 12th "pros/cons" document we produced. We have included as Attachment #3 to this letter a summary of the stakeholder discussions that the three Leadership Council members heard at our meeting on March 25th. Members of the Committee are open to questions from any of you, and many of us look forward to being available during your discussion and deliberations at the Leadership Council meeting on May 27th or 28th.

Consortium to Sunset: At the end of this biennium on June 30th, the Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium will cease to exist as an independent stakeholder advisory group for coordinated ecosystem monitoring. However, our members are committed to ensuring the successful start-up of the coordinated regional monitoring and assessment program, and each of us will help in any way we can. Our project manager Karen Dinicola has provided Scott Redman of your staff with our contact information.

Thank you all for your attention to the urgent need for coordinated monitoring and for assuming the responsibility for making this important decision as to how to structure the new program in the long term and taking immediate steps to achieve the improvements we all agree are needed. We remain at your service.

Sincerely,
The Governance Committee of the Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium

Attachment #1: First Steps in Developing an Integrated, Coordinated Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring and Assessment Program

Key steps to take following Leadership Council decision May 27 or 28 in order to harness current momentum, keep stakeholders engaged, and realize efficiencies to improve usefulness and credibility of data collected in Puget Sound:

Tasks

1. Establish steering committee or proto board and hire one new Partnership staff person to shepherd program development.
2. Establish technical committee and commission, support, and coordinate the efforts of work groups to describe and implement topic-specific approaches to coordinated monitoring.
3. Establish coordinated program per model selected in May 2009 by Partnership's Leadership Council.
 - a. For an independent institute: Hire interim staff. Define roles and relationships and develop institutional documents (articles of incorporation, bylaws), cost-sharing arrangements, and work plans. If legislation is required or desired, develop and engage stakeholder support for legislation to authorize and help fund the institute in FY11 or later if budget situation does not improve.
 - b. For a program at the Partnership: Hire manager and permanent staff. Define roles and relationships and develop institutional documents (charters, bylaws), cost-sharing arrangements, and work plans. Develop supplemental budget request to help fund the program in FY11 or later if budget situation does not improve.

Deliverables

- Steering committee or proto board. Establish by June 30, first meeting in July.
- Dedicated staff person to build the program. Hire by October 31.
- Institutional documents. Complete by January 31, 2010.
- Strategic plans and implementation plans for oversight board/committee, staff, and technical committee for FY 11 and longer-term completed by December 31, 2010.
- Work plans for FY10 and early FY11. Complete by November 30.
- Proposed cost-sharing arrangements. Complete by June 2010.
- Technical Committee. Establish by September 30.
 - Formal transition of 2-5 existing monitoring efforts to become official Work Groups of the regional monitoring program. Key staff and participants identified and relationships defined. Complete by December 31.
 - Detailed work plan and FY10 and 11 funding allocations and cost-sharing from others. Quantified cost savings and other efficiencies expected to be realized by the coordinated program. Complete by December 31.
 - Coordinated assessment strategies, implementation plans, and protocols. Complete by October 2010.
- Stormwater Work Group work in progress. Complete by June 2010:
 - Prioritized monitoring objectives, testable hypotheses, study design framework, and proposed peer review strategy.
 - Peer-reviewed scientific design for the regional stormwater monitoring program for impacts to beneficial uses, characterization, and efficacy.
 - An implementation plan (including cost-sharing and recommended NPDES permit requirements) for the regional monitoring program.
 - Work plan for FY11.
- Budget proposal for 2011-13 state funding, including description of program funding anticipated from other sources (and necessary interagency agreements), included in Partnership or other agency budget request by August 2010.
- Expand technical committee and develop regional ecosystem monitoring and assessment strategy by June 2011.

Attachment #2: Proposed Responsibilities of Coordinated Monitoring Program Staff

Excerpted from the 10 December 2008 report to the Legislature, pp. 17-18:

New, dedicated staff and other capacity is needed to:

1. Perform scientific analysis and cross-topic synthesis and integration;
2. Assist the Puget Sound Science Panel in identifying the highest priority science activities for ecosystem recovery. The Science Panel has identified this function as one of its top priorities for the 2009-2011 Biennial Science Work Plan to support the Action Agenda for Puget Sound ecosystem recovery efforts;
3. Ensure that there is a direct, strong, and transparent connection between policy and management decisions and the scientific and technical information and data that support them. The Consortium has found that it is crucial for a regional monitoring and assessment program to have a fully supported science-policy interface and communication function. As the Partnership defines the decision-making process, reporting relationships, and flows of information for the regional program, the specific roles, duties, and need for dedicated staff to perform this function will become clearly evident;
4. Serve as the liaison between the Science Panel and the numerous public and private agencies and organizations with an interest in the regional monitoring and assessment plan. This function includes supporting the Work Groups and providing continuity;
5. Provide Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and mapping analyses including coordinating with and filling gaps in existing data from private, university, tribal, federal, state, and local sources. These analyses need to be done in support of the work groups and cross-topic analyses. They will help the Science Panel and the regional monitoring and assessment program understand and focus on the areas of greatest risk and uncertainty;
6. Oversee information management. The importance of this function cannot be overstated. The Consortium has found that the ability to freely access, share, and analyze information is the foundation for a successful regional monitoring program. Without a fully supported information management framework and services, cross-topic analysis, integration, and prioritization will fall short of providing the ecosystem perspective necessary to successfully restore Puget Sound; and
7. Oversee all work that is contracted out. The Consortium has found that it is important to avoid making the science staff responsible for the business aspects of contract work. It is appropriate to expect the science staff to review the work performed in areas of expertise, but a separate project manager or liaison is needed to execute all the necessary paperwork and act as the primary point of contact for multiple contractors performing data collection and other monitoring and assessment activities being done by other entities on behalf of the program.

For all or at least the first year of the 2009-2011 biennium, these staff should report to the Partnership's Science Manager and perform their duties under the direction of the Science Panel. Beyond this transition period, depending on the governance structure the Partnership selects, these staff would either continue to report to the Partnership's Science Manager or to a private, non-profit institute's Executive Director.

Attachment #3: Summary of Stakeholder Discussions

Excerpted from the final summary of the 25 March Governance Committee meeting with three members of the Leadership Council – Bill Ruckelshaus, Martha Kongsgaard, and Bill Wilkerson:

The following key messages were expressed:

Regarding credibility and perception:

- The data need to be trustworthy for all stakeholders – the information itself needs to be tough to challenge. Recognizing the unique nature of the Partnership as a different kind of state agency, it might still be easier to question the motive behind information coming out of the Partnership. Stand-alone information from an independent entity that has no management or regulatory authority or responsibility and is responsible only for collection and analysis of data will have the most perceived credibility. This challenge could be addressed in creating a program at the Partnership but extra steps may be required.
- Need to directly address underlying distrust between regulators and regulated entities.
- The Partnership is currently all about policy. A strong science program needs to be set up and could be done either way.
- Having a separate institute dedicated to the science functions may strengthen the Partnership's situation: "This is the information we have and this is where we need to go."
- Credibility is the strength behind the organization: guard the program's impartiality from the outset, and continue to make this a priority. Provide a firewall between data and policy.

Regarding participation:

- All of the players need each other.
- Openness and cooperation are absolutely necessary in setting up a successful program, setting priorities, and protecting essential science activities.
- Of particular interest and importance is who controls what questions are asked, and how they are presented to the scientists charged with answering them.
- We need a way to get past the tendency of each stakeholder to want to do things their own way; and in particular for ongoing programs to continue doing things a certain way.
- All stakeholders need access to good data, and it is essential that the right entities be selected to conduct the monitoring under either model.
- Coordinate, don't take over.
- The San Francisco Estuary Institute has a 5-year review to ensure its program is meeting the needs of its clients.
- A strong program's participants/partners will defend it in times of uncertain budgets.

Regarding concerns about State natural resource agency roles:

- Need to address autonomy up front: recognize regulatory mandates and associated science needs as well as capacities to collect and analyze information.
- The important long-term monitoring work of PSAMP needs to continue; but its organization and perhaps its focus likely needs to change under either model, and unlike in the current PSAMP, efficacy absolutely needs to be addressed and the monitoring information directly tied to management decisions.
- It is important to counter the tendency for provisoed funds to be shifted to other agency priorities.

Regarding Tribal treaty rights:

- Either model needs to recognize the treaty rights of Tribes. The Partnership has a direct legal link but such a link could be included in setting up the institute.

Regarding costs and funding:

- Stable long-term source of funding is required – not just state and federal funds.
- An obvious point of coordination for cost sharing is needed.
- Local governments are more likely to participate in an independent private institute.
- "Pay or play" option has been successful in programs elsewhere.
- Many businesses indicate they are more comfortable with the idea of contributing funds to a private institute, but there is potential for them to contribute to either.

- It would likely initially be less expensive to implement a program at the Partnership but not necessarily so in the long run.
- The main difference in costs is having an institute director versus a Partnership staff person overseeing the program, and this difference may be offset in the long term.

Regarding concerns about setting up yet another program structure:

- Need to clearly articulate the benefits of doing so.
- There's already enough confusion, particularly in the science and monitoring realm – is an institute (or even a new program at the Partnership) really the simplest way of doing the necessary interagency coordination and cross-topic integration, and why?
- Legislators are already confused by all of the groups and their roles, and wary that the Partnership, Forum, and Consortium are not coordinating among themselves.
- Wasn't the Science Panel created to do this? To be the independent entity? To resolve disputes about the data and inform the Leadership Council and Ecosystem Coordination Board in their decision making?
- We know how to interface with the Partnership, an institute will create another entity with which to coordinate – don't create another layer.
- In the current economic situation, we need to identify what shouldn't continue to be done.

Regarding essential program elements:

- Ensure that analysis of the data is sufficiently funded.
- Absolutely need strong quality assurance and control program and to develop, operate and maintain a database that allows access to the information by all partners and the public.
- Make certain the correct data are collected to provide accountability.

Regarding the transition to the new program over time:

- It will take a lot of work, some of it difficult and contentious, to get the new program going.
- We need a decision in May so that we know where we're headed over the next 2 years – we also need to develop both an interim and a long-term strategy to get there, and we should begin work on that now.
- No one wants to wait – the program should begin at the Partnership, and, if that is the decision, transition to the institute over time.
- Local government urgency is driven by Ecology permit timelines.
- Legislation is recommended and likely necessary to set up the institute – work with state legislators in preparation for the 2010 session will begin this summer, possibly amid a larger conversation about government reform (highlight the progress and deliverables thus far)
 - Some of the best work done by the Consortium is the pilot projects to establish sampling protocols and standardize data management for high-need topics, and convening the Stormwater Work Group.
- Focus on bullet 7 in pros/cons document: who will lead this new program during the transition and in the long term – it will take a major effort for either model.
- Need to be clear about what we are recommending and what types of monitoring are and are not being recommended for inclusion in the new coordinated monitoring program. The accountability functions remain at the Partnership.
- Need to decide where to start (what work groups: stormwater, salmon recovery, toxics...).
- Be clear as to the future of the Consortium.