

Puget Sound Partnership August 2009 Progress Report

Performance Management

The Performance Management work team continues to apply the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation to the Action Agenda. After a second workshop with Foundations of Success in early July, a report out to the Leadership Council in mid-July, meetings with the Science Panel and a briefing to the Ecosystem Coordination Board in late July, we can report the following progress:

- Confirmation of the geographic scope of the Action Agenda to include "snow caps to the white caps" and the entire ecosystem.
- Adoption of a set of ecosystem focal components as an organizing framework for assessing progress.
- Adoption by the Science Panel of a reporting set of indicators, organized by component and the six legislative goals.
- Staff continues to gather data on the indicators, work with owners of the data on analysis and interpretation.
- Staff work will identify desired future conditions, or quantifiable targets, for any indicators of status where the science provides a basis for a 2020 goal.
- Staff met with stakeholders to do an initial ranking of threats to the Puget Sound ecosystem at the basin wide scale. Local threat ratings will follow later when we have capacity to advance them in a more comprehensive way.
- Staff are developing a set of results chains for some of the strategies in the Action Agenda. An initial results chain has been developed for stormwater and for the invasive species threat, including holding a workshop with the Invasive Species Council.
- The Near Term Action Questionnaire was distributed to implementers to get their commitments to the Action Agenda for the 2009-11 biennium. Agencies were also asked to report on progress under the old 2007-09 Plan for the last biennium.
- The Performance Management Cross Partnership Workgroup convened and will be making recommendations on quantifiable performance measures to the Leadership Council in the fall, including any available desired future conditions for indicators of status and of any threat reduction outcomes or intermediate outcomes that emerge from the development of a sample set of results chains.

Oil Spill Oversight

The Puget Sound Partnership received a new responsibility from the 2009 Legislature to provide an assessment and recommendations for any necessary improvements to Washington State's oil spill prevention, preparedness and response programs. We are currently talking with other state agencies, stakeholders, and the Governor's Office to identify and evaluate possible options for us to implement this new responsibility. We

have already met with the staff of the Oil Spill Advisory Council and the Governor's Policy Office. We have met with the Director of the Oil Spill Advisory Council and the Department of Fish and Wildlife and plan to have an overview presented to the Leadership Council at your September meeting. We are also working through the necessary processes to hire a research analyst to support this new responsibility.

Puget Sound Partner Designation

We are currently working with other agencies and organizations to draft criteria and processes for designating Puget Sound Partners. Respectful of the government-to-government relationship with Tribes, we are also working with Terry Wright from the Northwest Indian Fish Commission to draft criteria and processes for designating tribal governments as Puget Sound Partners. Our work will be shared and evaluated by a broader group of stakeholders, as well as the ECB, at September meeting. The Leadership Council will be asked to give final approval in the fall.

Puget Sound Legislative Agenda

We have a tremendous opportunity before the next legislative session to establish a "Puget Sound legislative agenda." I shared this idea with other state agencies and there was general consensus that natural resource state agencies should work together to develop, strategize, prioritize and advance policy and budget requests with a nexus to Puget Sound in a way that is consistent with the priorities of the Action Agenda. I have also had favorable conversations with the Association of Counties, the Association of Cities and Mo McBroom at the Washington Environmental Council about working together to advance a Puget Sound legislative agenda.

For this to succeed, we will involve and engage the Leadership Council and Ecosystem Coordination Board to develop legislative policy and budget priorities that help protect and restore Puget Sound as we work to submit proposals to the Governor by September 28 and the Legislature in December.

Oysters Ground Zero for Ocean Acidification

Using last year's EPA money, we have launched an emergency oyster study to gauge the possible impact of ocean acidification on young oyster (seed) survival just as they form their shell. Corrosive water associated with "Ocean Acidification" can prohibit the early shell-formation process. The study design calls for looking at native (Olympia oysters) in South Sound, and Pacific oysters in Hood Canal's Dabob Bay. In July, research started in Totten Inlet on native oysters, and we intend to start the work with Pacific oysters in Dabob Bay in August.

We are also participating in a national effort, led by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to restore native oysters to U.S. Shorelines. Native oysters on the west coast and eastern oysters on the East and Gulf coasts are considered candidate keystone species by the NFWF board of directors. If the final decision is made by the board to

select native oysters as finalists, NFWF will seek funding from a wide range of funding sources to implement a recovery plan.

Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen

We are working closely with Scott Brewer and the Hood Canal Coordinating Council to engage a technical group to advise local elected officials about corrective actions that likely will help improve the canal's depressed oxygen situation. We will be sharing with a Technical Advisory Committee at their September 1 meeting what we have done over the past two biennia in terms of corrective actions and education and will emphasize the importance of 'staying the course' for the four advanced wastewater systems in lower Hood Canal.

Enforcement

We are involved the permitting subgroup of the governor's natural resource agency reform effort and have written a reset opportunity that includes many of the recommendations from the public agency focus group convened by the PSP last year.

Staff also met and discussed a strategy for moving the enforcement issue forward with EPA leadership. Our next step is to convene a larger group of stakeholders as we have only met with agencies so far, then we will form an enforcement advisory group to strategize next steps. We have \$125,000 set aside to work with one or two jurisdictions to work on incorporating the watershed assessments into their planning and regulatory processes; enforcement will be one issue that we focus on in those pilot watersheds. This is consistent with the focus group recommendations to use science to show the most important places to focus enforcement efforts.

Local Integration

The Hood Canal Coordinating Council will be presenting to the Leadership Council at their September meeting on their status of local integration. Prior to this discussion, a sub-committee of the Council will be discussing in more detail the steps they want to be taking for integration.

Local integration work is also proceeding well in the South Central, Strait, Whidbey, San Juan, and Whatcom action areas. New staff has been hired to cover the South Sound and North Central action areas.

Salmon Recovery Adaptive Management

The Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT) and PSP are working on developing monitoring and adaptive management plans for all fourteen watershed chapter areas over the next two years. The first three watersheds are San Juan, Hood Canal, and Skagit. We are using the Open Standards framework to develop these plans in concert with the local watershed groups. Use of the Open Standards framework is allowing us to be consistent and aligned with the broader Partnership's performance management and tracking work.

Puget Sound Starts Here Ready to Launch

Nearly 60 municipalities from across the region and the Partnership are getting ready to launch a comprehensive public education campaign in mid September called “Puget Sound Starts Here” that will link with the Partnerships overall public engagement program. The launch will involve conducting a major media event in Seattle along with local events around the Sound. We’ll be sending more details and information on PSSH in the coming weeks.

Partnership Lands Boeing Foundation Grant

We’re pleased to announce the PSP has secured two Boeing Foundation grants to expand citizen engagement in Puget Sound recovery!

The first is an environmental grant for \$75,000 to Expand and Enhance Citizen Science in Puget Sound through a coordinated citizen science network in Puget Sound that increases public stewardship and scientific literacy, and provides high-quality data to meet science and management needs. By increasing collaboration and communication between the volunteer community and science and management communities, this program will develop citizen science experiences that generate more intensive and invested public stewardship of Puget Sound. In addition, these citizen scientists will provide high-quality, cost-effective data essential to the restoration of Puget Sound.

The second is a civics grant for \$50,000 to create *My Sound* -- an online tool to make local public engagement and organizing easy. *My Sound* will tie together hundreds of organizations, thousands of events and news on environmental issues all over the Sound into one communications and engagement tool for people of varying interests and activity levels to use. The goal is to Build a social and institutional infrastructure to support broad-scale public engagement, foster stewardship and advance specific beneficial practices and behaviors. *Impact*

Puget Sound cannot be restored without active public engagement and critical information on regional and local ecosystems and recovery goals. Increased collaboration and communication between the public and organizations involved in clean up efforts will generate more intensive and invested public stewardship of Puget Sound.

ECO Network Continues to Grow

The first Regional ECO Network meeting was held on August 10 with 25 different agencies and organizations in attendance. A decision was made to formalize the network and continue meeting periodically to work together on priority actions. All 12 local networks have now scheduled their second or third meetings and some networks are already implementing plans to incorporate and enhance the Puget Sound Starts Here campaign

Around the Sound

Kitsap Sun environmental reporter Chris Dunagan highlights Puget Sound cleanup in a blog post about the soon-to-be-named EPA Region X administrator. In it, he interviews Chuck Clarke, who discusses the big issues the next administrator will face:

“You can’t live anywhere and not think that Puget Sound is going to be an issue for this regional administrator,” Chuck said, adding that the EPA has a role to play in helping to shape and carry out the state’s Puget Sound restoration strategy. Stormwater, which is regulated by the agency, is probably the key to dealing with pollution in Western Washington, he said.