

**September 2009  
Puget Sound Partnership  
Progress Report**

**\$10 Million Grant Proposal Submitted to NOAA**

The Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) local integration team, in cooperation with the Recreation and Conservation Office, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and Earth Corps, applied to NOAA for a Community Restoration Partnership grant. Our grant proposal asks for nearly \$10 million for three years to complete large-scale restoration projects at the mouths of major river systems where there is a high likelihood of re-creating ecosystem function. This work is the highest specific action on the Action Agenda's ranked near term restoration priorities. The grant proposal to NOAA also seeks funds to integrate the grant application, contracting, and reporting process for major river delta restoration projects funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration, the Estuary and Salmon Recovery grant program, and the NOAA Community Restoration Partnership.

**Performance Management/Accountability**

PSP staff continue to develop the Partnership's performance management system. Work has concentrated upon further developing specific results chains and defining threat reduction objectives. The Performance Management Advisory team met three times in September, including once with the ECB, to provide advice on threat reduction objectives. Examples will be presented at the October Leadership Council meeting. Work also continued on the State of the Sound report including refining report layouts, and collecting NTA questionnaires and budget information. Staff has met with the Departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife and Health to discuss and improve data collection and future meetings are anticipated. The State of the Sound report is on track to be completed by November 1.

**Budget**

The September GF-S revenue forecast released on September 17 was down \$238 million from the June forecast. This amounts to \$720 million in total revenue reductions since the budget was approved in May. Additional reductions are likely to be requested by the Office of Financial Management (OFM). Supplemental budget requests and reductions are due to OFM on October 19. The agency will be submitting revised budget activity descriptions for OFM approval to better describe the work of the agency.

**State Grant and Loan Program Review**

On September 16 letters were sent to agencies required to modify their state grant and loan programs. Responses are due in early October. This information will be used to complete the November 1 report on agency progress in meeting these requirements. Initial findings will be shared with state agencies at the end of October.

### **Cross Partnership Work Group on Social Strategies Underway**

The first meeting of the Cross Partnership Work Group focusing on social engagement strategies was held and future meetings were scheduled to continue the work. The overarching goal is to develop a comprehensive strategy to engage the 4 million people in the Puget Sound region that is linked to a clear work plan, with goals, benchmarks, necessary expertise and strategy components to build the enabling social conditions necessary for successful implementation of the Action Agenda.

### **Hood Canal**

PSP staff participated in the Technical Advisory Committee meeting of the Hood Canal Coordinating Council. We summarized the past five years' corrective actions and education projects related to the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program. We described the key actions and the ~\$56 M in appropriated state and federal funds related to nitrogen reduction projects.

### **Oyster Emergency and Ocean Acidification**

PSP staff moderated a panel discussion of ocean acidification/oyster emergency research conducted this summer off the coasts of Washington and Oregon, and in Puget Sound. Eight prominent federal, state, university and shellfish industry scientists took part in the panel discussion at the 63<sup>rd</sup> annual Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Conference held in Portland, Oregon. Although results are preliminary, industry and university scientists described correlation between coastal upwelling events, spurred by northerly coastal winds, and the related ocean and estuary increase in ocean acidity. About one day after the upwelling events, bay and estuary water became so corrosive that young oyster larvae could not survive into their post-larvae setting condition. NOAA officials from Washington D.C. were in attendance and commented on the significance of this research.

### **Oyster Restoration**

A final native oyster restoration workshop was hosted at the PSP offices. This month's meeting of the cooperative project proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation focused on the budget for the phased approach to rebuilding native oyster stocks beginning in South Sound, to initially establish healthy adult stocks for enhanced seed potential from the 'core' of the native oyster's historic populations. We estimate the current standing stock of oysters is about 4% of historic numbers.

### **Citizen Science**

In early 2009, we asked Washington Sea Grant (WSG) and Washington State University (WSU) Extension to do the necessary research to provide recommendations for supporting and advancing citizen science in Puget Sound. A Citizen Science Advisory Panel was formed and after a lot of hard work the Partnership received the recommendations in July. You can download a copy of the Executive Summary or the full report—*Harnessing Citizen Science to Protect and Restore Puget Sound*—from the WSG citizen science website.

Washington Sea Grant will begin implementation of some of these recommendations with funding from the Boeing Charitable Trust secured by the Puget Sound Partnership. WSG will also be developing an online clearinghouse of citizen science project information to increase access to information about and communication among citizen science efforts.

### **Invasive Species**

The Washington Invasive Species Council launched a new webpage that includes a 1-800 phone number and online system for reporting sightings of invasive species. It also identifies the top management priorities and 50 worst invasive species in the state.

<http://www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/>

The Washington Invasive Species Council received an EPA grant, approved by the Leadership Council, to develop an information clearinghouse data system, to conduct a baseline survey of the presence/absence of invasive species and to conduct limited outreach in the Puget Sound basin. The Council has designed and will launch an online survey that asks questions about who has what invasive species data in the Puget Sound region. This is step one in developing a baseline assessment for Puget Sound.

### *Ballast water discharges*

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife updated ballast water management rules became effective on August 1, 2009 as called for in the Action Agenda. The agency is conducting vessel inspections and enforcing noncompliance.

On August 28, 2009, the US Coast Guard published a notice of intent to adopt ballast water discharge standards for the nation. This action provides consistency on the west coast for both shippers and regulators. The state will comment on the proposed rules through the state Ballast Water Work Group. The Coast Guard proposes a two-phased standard. Phase 1 standards are consistent with the International Maritime Organization's standards adopted through an international treaty. Full implementation of these standards is 2016.

Phase 2 standards are 1,000 times more stringent than Phase 1. Full implementation depends on the size and year of construction of vessels. The Coast Guard must review the availability of technology to meet phase 2 standards by 2013 and can adopt more stringent standards based on this review.

### *Sound-wide early detection and rapid response system to address invasive species risks*

Over 100 volunteers are monitoring for the presence/absence of 28 marine invasive species identified on the state's Aquatic Invasive Species Watch List. The PSP helped secure People for Puget Sound as a host to coordinate volunteer monitors in King, Pierce, Thurston and Mason counties. The Partnership also paid for and printed an identification booklet to support the volunteers.

The PSP also hosted a workshop of 24 tunicate experts from around the world to help us re-evaluate the risks and threats that nonnative tunicates pose to Puget Sound and to identify key management strategies. We are currently wrapping up the results from this workshop and will adjust the scope of work to our contract with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to more appropriately address the state's response to tunicates.

Washington Department of Agriculture completed this year's work in the field and expects to reduce the total area of Spartina in Puget Sound from 240 acres to less than 20 acres. The department will evaluate the effectiveness of their control measures and report their results to the legislature in December 2009.

### **Stormwater Monitoring**

The Stormwater Work Group plans to release a draft stormwater monitoring and assessment strategy for public review on Wednesday, November 4. The various stakeholders who comprise the Stormwater Work Group have been meeting since October 2008 to prioritize objectives for monitoring stormwater and to develop the draft strategy document

On Tuesday, November 10, the Stormwater Work Group is hosting a Puget Sound Stormwater Monitoring Workshop, "Designing a Monitoring Program for the Future," at a Seattle-area location to be determined. The purpose of the workshop is to seek input on the draft stormwater monitoring and assessment strategy, set for release on Wednesday, November 4, and to discuss how we're all going to work together to implement the strategy.

### **Agency Request Legislation**

The Puget Sound Partnership continues working hard to develop agency request policy proposals for the 2010 legislative session. Our process is consistent with the timeline shared with the Leadership Council and the Ecosystem Coordination Board.

We evaluated the Action Agenda for policy proposals specified for the short-term and long-term. We then solicited policy proposals externally from stakeholders and government entities. The Ecosystem Coordination Board developed and recommended a list of 'Bold Actions.' We evaluated all policy concepts with the Bold Actions and have developed five concepts that we are working with government entities and stakeholders to refine and determine which ones to advance. To ensure adequate externally outreach, we requested an extension on the due date to submit proposals to the Governor's Office for approval. Our recommendations are due October 20.

The focuses of the Puget Sound Partnership's agency request proposals include: protecting ecosystem habitat, improving water quality, and reducing stormwater runoff.

### **Oil Spill**

The Puget Sound Partnership is working to establish the framework necessary to implement new responsibilities directed by the Legislature regarding issues related to oil

spill prevention and response. The 2009 Legislature directed the Puget Sound Partnership to provide “independent advice and assessment of the State’s oil spill prevention, preparedness and response programs, including review of existing activities and recommendations for any necessary improvements.” \$150,000 was allocated to help implement this new responsibility.

Externally, the Strait of Juan de Fuca Ecosystem Recovery Network (Strait ERN) was convened on September 11 and part of the agenda focused on oil spill prevention, preparedness and response along the Strait. Recommendations for next steps were made and will be finalized by the Strait ERN at their November 13 meeting.

Internally, recommendations have been made to utilize the Ecosystem Coordination Board to oversee the Partnership’s new responsibilities and hire a specialist to support this important work.

The Puget Sound Partnership is also creating a new webpage on the Puget Sound Partnership’s website to summarize and make available the following: recent action by the Legislature regarding oil spill issues; publications by the Oil Spill Advisory Council; an summary update on recent action by the Partnership; and Web links to oil spill related resources. We also continue working with the Department of Ecology and the Department of Fish and Wildlife as they develop and refine oil spill program work plans in accordance with workload, current capacity and recent budget forecasts. When finalized, we plan to post this information on our new webpage.