

Leadership Council Resolution 2011-07 Adopting a 2020 ecosystem recovery target for summer stream flow

WHEREAS, RCW 90.71.310(1)(c) states that “The action agenda shall include near-term and long-term benchmarks designed to ensure continuous progress needed to reach the goals, objectives, and designated outcomes by 2020;” and

WHEREAS, RCW 90.71.280(3), “the [leadership] council shall confer with the [science] panel on incorporating ... benchmarks into the action agenda;” and

WHEREAS, the Partnership has applied the term “targets” to refer to long-term benchmarks designed to ensure progress to designated outcomes by 2020; and

WHEREAS, the science-policy workshop convened as part of the Science Panel meeting on December 14, 2010 recommended that the Partnership adopt ecosystem recovery targets to address the full breadth of the Partnership’s interests in a recovered ecosystem as part of the 2011 revisions to the action agenda; and

WHEREAS, summer stream flows provide a key indication that “... river and stream flow levels [are] sufficient to sustain people, fish, and wildlife, and the natural functions of the environment (RCW 90.71.300(1)(e)); and

WHEREAS, summer stream flows that support salmon habitat needs, other ecosystem needs, and provide water for people provides a key indication that Puget Sound’s “... freshwater, estuary, nearshore, marine, and upland habitats are protected, restored, and sustained” (RCW 90.71.300(1)(d)); and

WHEREAS, water availability as measured by summer stream flow has been adopted as one of the Partnership’s Dashboard indicators of ecosystem condition; and

WHEREAS, technical experts from the Department of Ecology have presented analyses to the Partnership about potential ecosystem recovery targets for summer stream flows; and

WHEREAS, the Science Panel and the Puget Sound Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT), which provides scientific advice to the region’s salmon recovery effort, provided a review of technical materials developed in support of target setting; and

WHEREAS, the Ecosystem Coordination Board has discussed potential ecosystem recovery targets for summer stream flows, based on the background information presented in advance of their May 24 and 25, 2011 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the public and stakeholders were provided an opportunity to weigh in on the options provided; and

WHEREAS, a summary of information from these analysis, review, and engagement processes included in the meeting materials for the June 16 and 17, 2011 meeting of the Leadership

Council provide sufficient background for adoption of ecosystem recovery targets consistent with the Partnership's guiding principles for target setting

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Partnership defines a functioning, resilient ecosystem to include:

Summer stream flows that support salmon habitat needs, other ecosystem needs, and provide water for people

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Partnership's ecosystem recovery target for summer stream flow shall be expressed as:

By 2020, meet the following river-specific targets:

- a. Maintain stable or increasing flows in highly regulated rivers: Nisqually, Cedar, Skokomish, Skagit, Green
- b. Monitor low flow in Elwha River after dam removal
- c. Maintain stable flows in unregulated rivers that are currently stable: Puyallup, Dungeness, Nooksack
- d. Restore low flows to bring the Snohomish River from a weakly decreasing trend to no trend
- e. Restore low flows to bring the Deschutes River, North Fork Stillaguamish River, and Issaquah Creek from a strongly decreasing trend to a weakly decreasing trend

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Partnership will work collaboratively with the steering committee of the coordinated ecosystem monitoring and assessment program to explore and develop a robust system of indicators that more effectively address diverse aspects of stream flow and water availability. This work might consider: using 7-day low flows rather 30-day low flows as an indication of critical summer flow conditions; including more gages; addressing concerns over use of the 1975 to current time period; using a two-way indicator that includes the adequacy of flow levels (both status and trend); and developing an hydrologic index that captures "environmental flows."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that reevaluation of the target adopted by this resolution will be triggered at the direction of the Partnership's Science Panel based on their evaluation of scientific information about ecosystem conditions and pressures, especially the development of additional flow indicators as discussed above.

Resolution Moved By: Dan O'Neal

Resolution Seconded By: David Dicks

Approved/Denied/Deferred (underline one)

DATE: June 16, 2011