

Leadership Council Resolution 2011-12 Adopting a 2020 ecosystem recovery target for estuaries

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, extent of river mouth estuary wetlands provides a key indication that “freshwater, estuary, nearshore, marine, and upland habitats are protected, restored, and sustained” (RCW 90.71.300(d)); and

WHEREAS, extent of river mouth estuary wetlands can affect how “a quality of human life ... is sustained by a functioning Puget Sound ecosystem” (RCW 90.71.300(b)); and

WHEREAS, interests in the restoration of estuaries can diverge from interests in protecting and sustaining a viable agricultural economy in the Puget Sound Basin; and

WHEREAS, restoration of estuary wetlands is a key measure used by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for assessing Puget Sound ecosystem recovery efforts; and

WHEREAS, technical experts convened by Partnership staff have presented analyses to the Partnership about potential ecosystem recovery targets for river mouth estuaries; and

WHEREAS, the Science Panel and Puget Sound Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT) provided a review of technical materials developed in support of target setting; and

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

WHEREAS, the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council has discussed potential ecosystem recovery targets, based on the background information presented in advance of the May 24 and 25, 2011 Ecosystem Coordination Board 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:

Tidally-influenced wetland habitats at the estuaries of Puget Sound's major rivers that provide ecosystem functions, goods, and services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Partnership's 2020 recovery target for estuaries shall be expressed as:

By 2020, all Chinook natal river deltas meet 10-year salmon recovery goals (or 10% of restoration need as proxy for river deltas lacking quantitative acreage goals in salmon recovery plans) and 7,380 quality acres are restored basin-wide, which is 20% of restoration need.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Partnership encourages partners to continue assessments (via Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Program and/or salmon recovery efforts) to refine projections of the extent, configuration, and condition of wetlands at major river mouth estuaries needed for a functioning, resilient ecosystem.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Partnership will work collaboratively with the steering committee of the coordinated ecosystem monitoring and assessment program to develop a robust system of monitoring and indicators to effectively describe the condition of river mouth estuaries and their delivery of ecosystem functions and services.

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.

Resolution Moved By: Diana Gale

Resolution Seconded By: Steve Sakuma

Approved/Denied/Deferred (underline one)

DATE: June 17, 2011