

Puget Sound Partnership Update October 2009

Puget Sound Partner 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 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 external outreach, we requested an extension on the due date to submit proposals to the Governor's Office for approval. Our recommendations were due October 20th.

The focus of the Puget Sound Partnership's agency request proposals include:

- Protecting watersheds from copper by creating a market for safer and more environmentally friendly copper break pad alternatives.
- Protecting Shoreline habitat by reducing shoreline armoring.

Performance Management/Accountability

PSP staff have been focused on completing the State of the Sound report, report on State Grant and Loan programs and accompanying technical memos. The reports were presented to the Leadership Council at their November 2 meeting. Leadership Council members have two weeks to provide comments. It is anticipated that a final report will be published by the end of November. Performance Management Technical Memos will be posted by November 9th for a 30-day public review. Following submittal, staff will develop a work plan to complete the next steps in anticipation of providing state budget guidance by May 2010.

PSP is holding interviews for the Performance Manager Position on November 13th. It is hoped that this position can be hired by early December.

Budget and Contracts

The agency submitted a 2010 Supplemental budget request to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) on October 20th. These proposals will be discussed at the Leadership Council meeting. OFM has also initiated discussions with the Partnership regarding possible budget reduction option to help meet the state general fund shortfall. The Partnership also worked with OFM to revise the agency's activity description in the state budget system, moving the agency from one activity to four. This was done to more accurately describe the work of the agency to OFM, the legislature and the public.

Ecosystem Recovery Team

Habitat Protection: The Recovery Council is working on habitat protection, currently focusing on the Shoreline Master Program updates.

RCO Coordination Meetings

We completed meetings in seven WRAs with RCO to assess current coordination between water resource management and salmon recovery implementation efforts under 2514 and 2496. This was a legislative requirement under HB 2157.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Puget Sound salmon recovery habitat restoration and acquisition projects were funded through Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) (\$7.5 million in 2009) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) (\$33 million in 2009-2011) funds. In October, the SRFB's Technical Review Panel reviewed the Puget Sound region's salmon recovery habitat restoration and acquisition projects for implementation in 2010, and will make a recommendation to the SRFB in December for which projects should receive funding.

Adaptive Management and Monitoring: Working with Recovery Implementation

Technical Team to develop monitoring and adaptive management plans for all fourteen watershed chapters of the Salmon Recovery Plan. Monitoring and adaptive management plans are being formed through the Open Standards approach used for the Action Agenda.

Whidbey Basin Action Area: Implementing Action Agenda priorities, including Samish Bay water quality, high priority restoration projects, and aquatic reserves for Smith and Minor Island and Port Susan Bay. Advancing the dialogue around draft alternatives for local integration.

South Central Action Area

The South Central Action Area Caucus Group held its initial meeting on October 9, which was well-attended. The Caucus Group is being chaired by Theresa Jennings, Director of King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks and South Central Action Area ECB representative, is chairing the Caucus Group. Bill Ruckelshaus and Martha Kongsgaard attended and provided the context for the group's work and the importance of local coordination and integration to implement the Action Agenda. The Caucus Group is currently working to establish operating guidelines, a work plan for the coming year, and to identify guiding principles to inform a discussion of local priorities.

South Sound

South Sound integration workgroup members recently discussed potential approaches to Action Agenda implementation in the South Sound. The workgroup proposed convening a group of elected county officials and tribal leaders to discuss options for organizational structure and strategy for South Sound coordination. If elected officials

and tribal leaders accept the invitation to participate, a meeting will be scheduled possibly sometime in January 2010.

The South Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Group (SSSRG) will attend a work session facilitated by John Kliem and Debbie Holden on October 29th. The work session, the second of three, is aimed at establishing the structure of a potential South Sound group/organization for South Sound salmon recovery.

San Juan Activities

We have been working to identify a Local Integrating Organization in San Juan County

- San Juan County appointed the Partnership recommended steering committee at their meeting two weeks ago.
- The first meeting for the steering committee is this Wednesday from 12-2.

West Sound/North Central Action Area

The West Sound Watershed Council is in the formative stages of planning a retreat for WSWC members to do some strategic planning for 2010. Topics will likely include adaptive management and local integration.

Tribal Relations

Continued meeting with tribes to discuss proposed agreement that would establish a regular forum to discuss policy issues. We also discussed the need for capacity funding needs of the tribes and watershed assessments.

Watershed Characterizations

This project is on track to deliver course scale characterizations based on water flow by the end of the year. We have completed an agreement with EPA regarding a loaned staff person to focus on assisting local governments connect watershed characterizations to local planning and regulatory processes.

Science Program

Activities have focused on: (1) developing a 2009 report on ecosystem status and trends for the State of the Sound (with much help from experts from around the region and members of the Science Panel), (2) hiring 2 key positions for the science staff: science program manager and monitoring coordinator, (3) developing the teams of scientists who will lead development of next spring's Puget Sound Science Update and (4) coordinating the ecosystem status portion of the Partnership's performance management system.

Also, Science Panel membership and leadership is changing: new members and old will meet together on November 17 & 18; new chair & vice chair (Tim Quinn & Joel Baker, respectively) take office in January.

Public Engagement

ECO Net Block Grants (\$185,000 total) will be distributed to the 12 local ECO Networks to implement the E.4 section of the Action Agenda locally. Money will be distributed depending on the population the Local ECO Net is serving.

We are meeting with the Pacific Science Center to support a proposal to the National Science Foundation for a planning grant to create a multi-faceted program on the Puget Sound that might include a display at the Pacific Science Center where guest scientists and others can engage the public on current topics, a Science on Wheels program and promotion of volunteer and citizen science opportunities around the sound in partnership with ECO Net.

The Partnership is supporting an effort by a number of stakeholders to use the performance of Salmonpeople by Peter Donaldson to reach new audiences through art around the Puget Sound and tying it in with the Puget Sound Starts Here campaign.

On November 4 & 5, six of Puget Sound's larger School Districts, one Education Service District, and two Skill Centers will be meeting to develop a framework for the study of Puget Sound in our regions schools. This two-day retreat is being facilitated by the Pacific Education Institute.

Kristen has secured two interns from the University of Washington to work on promotion of the Puget Sound Starts Here campaign through video and picture content.

The first ever meeting between coordinators of all 12 Local ECO Networks was held. Joe Ryan talked to them about the Ecosystem Recovery Coordinators and the ECO Net's role in Action Agenda implementation and integration. It was a very successful meeting.

Hood Canal

We are helping make positive progress in development of the Hood Canal Coordinating Council work plan for watershed management, emphasizing the dissolved oxygen program. PSP staff members are working closely with HCCC director Scott Brewer and his staff, and elected officials on the council to recommend actions in the canal that will reduce nitrogen sources that are resulting in decreased dissolved oxygen in marine waters. The technical advisory committee will be doing much of the work in developing recommendations, and subcommittees are being formed to accomplish major tasks in areas of wastewater, forestry, agriculture, and stormwater.

We are also actively working with the HCCC and the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program (HCDOP) to finalize scientific results done over a five- year period by the integrated assessment and modeling program. Scientific principal investigators are preparing manuscripts for submission to various journals before February 2010 when federal funding ends. These documents will serve as the basis for peer-review process

for the IAM work; a "Synthesis" document of all the scientific research is being prepared by Dr. Jan Newton and should be available in February.

PSP staff and David Dicks attended the groundbreaking ceremony of the new Belfair Wastewater and water reclamation project that will be constructed in 2010. Many dignitaries, including Congressman Norm Dicks took part in the ceremony.

PSP staff presented to the Retired Scientists of Mason County about the key scientific findings of the Dissolved Oxygen Program and the major initiatives underway related to advanced wastewater systems in Lower Hood Canal.

Water quality and Dissolved Oxygen studies in South Sound

PSP staff served as master of ceremonies at an Oakland Bay (Shelton) clean water open house event to publically demonstrate progress made in the bay's water quality as relates to shellfish growing standards. Almost all of the bay's growing areas have improved and are only conditioned on heavy rain events. Many state federal agencies and local governments, conservation districts, the shellfish industry, WSU and Washinton Sea Grant, and the Squaxin Tribe presented at the event or prepared informational materials to educate the local citizens about what is being done and the progress that has been made.

We also participated at an Ecology Workshop in Pierce County that described the circulation model for South Puget Sound's Dissolved Oxygen study. The D.O. study report is available on Ecology's web site, and the public comment period runs through November 12. The next phase will be the water quality portion of the study that focuses on nitrogen from rivers, the nearshore, and wastewater treatment plants. One of the key issues will be whether nitrogen from wastewater treatment plants in central Puget Sound is influencing south sound's dissolved oxygen depression.

Oyster Emergency and Ocean Acidification:

The UW research vessel, "Jack Robertson", conducted water quality sampling in Totten Inlet to establish baseline conditions and the relationship of dissolved carbon dioxide and primary parameters that influence CO2 levels. The "ORCA" (remote sensing and continuous monitoring) buoy that was to be moved in Hood Canal from the Duckabush River mouth to Dabob Bay this month ran into logistics problems, and this will not be accomplished until the spring of 2010.