

Puget Sound Partnership Update December 2009

Action Area Reports

San Juan/Whatcom Action Area

San Juan

- Local integration efforts are proceeding successfully. The final recommendation report from the San Juan Local Integration Steering Committee has been presented to the county council, tribes, and the community for review. The county council plans to discuss the recommendations for a Local Integrating Organization at their January 26, 2010, meeting. The tribes are planning to discuss the recommendations in late January or early February.
- The adaptive management process for the salmon recovery plan is progressing.

Whatcom

Efforts are currently underway on the following:

- Assisting with development and coordination of strong proposals for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Request for Proposals (RFP).
- Garnering community and legislative support for salmon recovery projects on the Governor's supplemental capital budget.
- Laying the groundwork for local integrating efforts, which includes enhancing ECONet coordination within the community and strategizing with local government and the local marine resources committee.

Whidbey Basin Action Area (Skagit, Stillaguamish, Island, and Snohomish watersheds)

Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) staff has begun discussions across the Whidbey Basin on the scale and focus of local integration. Further conversation is needed to determine the structure and scale that makes the most sense for implementing the Action Agenda.

- *Skagit Watershed*: Skagit watershed was funded through Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Program for \$5,155,493 to implement priority salmon restoration projects in December. This represents a culmination of many years of work. Skagit is also advancing their monitoring and adaptive management efforts. The Samish Clean Water Initiative, a 21-member group of entities focused on cleaning up Samish River and Bay is underway, including public meetings, press releases, landowner workshops, and compliance activities.
- *Stillaguamish Watershed*: Stillaguamish watershed was funded through SRFB and PSAR for \$2,621,041 to implement priority salmon restoration projects in December. Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area (in Stillaguamish and Island watersheds) is beginning to take shape through a conservation action planning process facilitated through a consortium of tribes, the Marine Resource Committees, and the Nature Conservancy (TNC).
- *Island Watershed*: Island watershed was funded through SRFB and PSAR for \$1,143,187 to implement priority salmon restoration projects in December.
- *Snohomish Watershed*: Snohomish watershed was funded through SRFB and PSAR for \$2,835,530 to implement priority salmon restoration projects in December. Snohomish is advancing their monitoring and adaptive management work, coordinating with the Partnership.

South Sound Action Area

The South Sound action area is preparing for a meeting of South Sound elected county and tribal officials. The elected officials will meet with Bill Ruckelshaus on February 4, to discuss the development of a South Sound organization that will focus on Action Agenda implementation. A Core Group subcommittee has been meeting to develop ideas for the structure and strategy of the organization, for consideration by the elected officials.

South Central Action Area (Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish, Green/Duwamish, and Puyallup/White watersheds)

Many jurisdictions and local watershed groups in the South Central Action Area continue to implement important projects and programs contributing to Puget Sound recovery. To help coordinate and integrate these efforts, the South Central Action Area Caucus Group has organized and convened as the local group to help advise the Partnership and guide local implementation of the Action Agenda. The Caucus Group includes participation from a group of key local implementer groups that represent the broad community of interests in the action area. The Caucus Group has met three times and is moving forward a process, using the Action Agenda as a guide, to identify and sequence local priority actions for Puget Sound recovery.

Recent local implementation highlights include:

- *EPA Watershed Assistance grants* – In response to the \$10 million EPA watershed assistance grant opportunity, local jurisdictions in the action area are developing multiple proposals to fund innovative work not typically funded through usual sources. Some potential proposals involve working to establish integrated floodplain management, coordinated implementation of multi-jurisdictional low impact development projects, watershed status and trends monitoring of aquatic and riparian habitat, establishing a certification (e.g., LEED) for green/soft shorelines, and developing a jurisdictional master plan for water quality improvement.
- *Completion of high-priority salmon habitat restoration along Duwamish River* – The North Winds Weir project restores a two-and-half-acre chunk of Duwamish riverbank to create a large, shallow eddy to provide refuge and food for Chinook salmon. This project, which began in 2001, involved acquiring one of the few remaining undeveloped properties in the Duwamish estuary and restoring it to provide salmon habitat. The project is a partnership between King County and the Army Corps of Engineers and received funding from multiple sources, including SRFB, Elliott Bay/Duwamish Restoration Program, Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, Army Corps of Engineers, King County, City of Seattle, City of Tukwila, and the King Conservation District. While the project is small in acreage compared to the great work being done in places such as the Nisqually estuary, this work is just as important in terms of making progress toward recovering the salmon population in the Green/Duwamish River.
- *Salmon Recovery Funding* – In December 2009, the Lake Washington/ Cedar/Sammamish, Green/Duwamish, and Puyallup/White watersheds received more than \$4 million in SRFB and PSAR funds to implement salmon recovery and Action Agenda priorities. These projects are identified by watershed salmon recovery plans and reviewed through technical and policy groups locally and regionally.

Hood Canal Action Area

PSP staff is working with the Hood Canal Coordinating Council to develop an “Integrated Watershed Plan” that is coordinated with PSP’s performance management work. This Plan will guide the implementation work in the Hood Canal for the Action Agenda, including their specific watershed plans. Hood Canal was funded through SRFB and PSAR for \$5,659,652 to implement priority salmon restoration projects in December. The Skokomish Chinook Recovery Plan is in draft form, filling a gap in the Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan.

North Central Action Area

Most of the Partnership work in North Central Action Area has been centered on the West Sound Watersheds Council (WSWC) retreat. They are moving forward with the results from the retreat, which included formalizing the WSWC operational structure, revisiting the group's mission, thinking about their role in local integration, reinvigorating the role cities play in the Watershed Council, and refining methodologies for prioritizing salmon recovery projects in West Sound. We are presenting a suite of recommendations and hosting discussions at the next WSWC meeting on January 20, for recommendations on next steps from the entire committee. In addition, we are revisiting adaptive management to tee up the group to start answering questions associated with the near term guidance document.

The EPA grants are coming along, with Partnership staff serving as a resource to project applicants and have expressed our support of these proposals to the county board of commissioners.

Partnership staff continues to set up meetings to meet with new people and learn more about the North Central Action Area, most notably with the tribes and the stormwater/LID people.

Strait of Juan de Fuca Action Area

Outcomes from the November 13, 2009, meeting of the Strait of Juan de Fuca Ecosystem Recovery Network (Strait ERN) and progress on next steps include:

- Integration Proposal – A draft proposal, developed by a Focus Group (“subcommittee”), will be considered by the full Strait ERN at their meeting in February.
- EPA Puget Sound Watershed Assistance Grant RFP – Four categories of actions were finalized at the November meeting, each with one or more project ideas. After numerous subsequent meetings and conversations, four proposals from the Strait Action Area are now being drafted for submission to the EPA for this funding opportunity, three of which involve multi-county partnerships between entities within Clallam and Jefferson. The fourth proposal is a partnership between a city and a tribe.
- Strait ECO Net – *Puget Sound Starts Here* campaign and the need to educate the public on connecting the Strait to the Puget Sound were discussed at the November meeting. Strait ERN encouraged Strait ECO Net to focus on developing a personal narratives project to promote a “values based” discussion on natural resources along the Strait.
- Shoreline Master Program Updates – Clallam Work Group will function as a key policy stakeholder group for the county and cities updating their Shoreline Master Plans (SMPs) over the coming years.
- Oil Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response – On behalf of the Strait ERN, Commissioners Tharinger and Austin submitted a comment letter on the Federal Non-Tank Vessel Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NTVRP) Rulemaking efforts.

The next set of meetings for the Strait Ecosystem Recovery Network (Strait ERN) is scheduled for February 26, 2010; a draft agenda is available on request.

Progress on other actions within the Action Area include:

- Salmon Recovery Actions – PSAR capacity grant contract for North Olympic Peninsula Lead Entity is now complete; National Estuary Preserve (NEP) contract nearly so. Assisted in proactive efforts to update 3-year work plan for 2010; Work is on schedule.
- Port Angeles Harbor Recovery – Organized and facilitated a meeting of the three Tribes and state agencies to coordinate efforts to recover Port Angeles Harbor. Next Step – A broader collaborator meeting in April 2010.

Aquatic Habitat Guidelines Steering Committee – The Partnership is represented on this multi-agency group who are responsible for developing integrated guidelines and white papers to guide the protection and restoration of marine, freshwater, and riparian habitat (See this

website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/ahg/>). After completing a statewide survey of local needs, efforts have shifted to finalizing a 3-year work plan.

Performance Management/Accountability

The 2009 State of the Sound report will be available on the Web by mid-January with print versions available later in the month.

Staff is developing a work plan to complete significant portions of the performance management system in 2010. This includes a) finalizing the ecosystem components that better define the statutory goals; b) completing the threat grouping needed for setting threat reduction objectives, targets and benchmarks; c) setting threat reduction objectives, targets and benchmarks; and d) agreeing to performance measures for the near-term actions funded for the 2009-11 biennium.

This information will be part of the budget development guidance for state agencies. Cross-Partnership group work sessions have been scheduled to help guide the work.

2010 Science Update

The 2010 Science Update is underway. *The Puget Sound Science Update* will be the state-of-the-science document supporting the work of the Puget Sound Partnership to restore and protect the Puget Sound ecosystem. The Partnership statute calls for the Update to be completed by April 2010. The work is on schedule to be completed on time. A Web page and FAQ have been developed to help explain the importance of the update, process, and schedule.

Stormwater and Low Impact Development

Establishing an Ecosystem Monitoring System: The Stormwater Work Group, charged with developing the first element of this stormwater monitoring system, released a draft strategy framework document in December. They are now working to finalize the draft, and then develop an implementation strategy. All work by the group is due by June 30, 2010. Partnership staff are key participants in the group.

Developing and implementing low impact development (LID) incentives: Three of the biggest incentives identified are quality, inexpensive training; technical guidance; and flow control credits. The Partnership is in the process of developing an interagency agreement with WSU Extension to provide low-cost state of the art LID training, completely revise the LID Technical Guidance Manual for Puget Sound and make it available for free, and revise the flow control credits for using LID techniques in development projects.

ECO Net

Interviews have been conducted with all 12 local ECO Net Coordinators to evaluate progress and identify opportunities for improvement in the ECO Net structure and grant process for the coming year. More than 18 Local ECO Network meetings have been held across the sound in the past two months.

Most of the 12 *Puget Sound Starts Here* Toolkits (5,000 to each ECO Net) and Block grants (\$185,000 total, split into \$25,000, \$15,000 and \$10,000) have been finalized by the ECO Networks and implementation will start in February.

Washington Sea Grant has received the Citizen Science grant from the Foundation for Puget Sound (\$75,000).

The Pacific Education Institute and the Puget Sound Partnership have created a Puget Sound Education Consortium with the goal of engaging approximately 95 Puget Sound School Districts as groups of contiguous school districts organized to address the call to action to preserve and restore a pollution free Puget Sound. This initial coalition of 5 districts (Tahoma, Highline,

Issaquah, Federal Way and Auburn) has completed the groundwork for other coalitions to follow. The Consortium will develop Puget Sound sustainability curriculum plans and experiences. There will be six different entry points that have been documented as successful learning experiences that promote both student achievement and student attention, They are Career & Technical Education, Puget Sound Academies, Units, Outdoor Classrooms, Field Experiences and Action Projects.

Upcoming events to note include "Storming the Sound", January 29, in La Conner, an all day professional development and networking opportunity for non-formal educators and K-12 teachers.

"Sound Waters: A One Day University", February 6, in Coupeville. Over 500 members of the public can choose amongst 60 classes to learn more about the Puget Sound environment. This year's theme is "Puget Sound Starts Here: Why Act? What Works". Dr. Nathaniel Scholz, NOAA, will give the keynote: "Stormwater, Salmon, and the Health of Puget Sound".

Communications and Outreach

December wrapped up a successful year for the Partnership's social media public engagement. We ended the year with over 625 Facebook fans and an average daily page view of 140 fans. (These are fans that have received our update and continue on to our actual page.) We're averaging around 1000 URL clicks per month on the Partnership and Puget Sound Starts Here Twitter pages. Bruce's LID blog has 145+ subscribers and Kristen's ECO Net blog is doing equally as well. Our YouTube channel has over 2,250 channel views and over 30 subscribers. The Partnership's Flickr site is well over 3000 donated photos, and we've held four successful volunteer photo excursions.

The Partnership's Facebook site is second only to the Governor's in state government in terms of visitors.

Budget and Contracts

Since the November meeting the Governor released her "no new revenue" budget proposal in December. This proposal reduced state funding for PSP's operating budget by almost 10 percent, or \$586,000, and increased federal funding by \$3.1 million. Other state agencies also saw reduction and a few selected enhancements. PSP has been working with agencies to ascertain the impact of the Governor's proposal on Puget Sound recovery. The Governor did provide \$10 million in capital funds to the Partnership to implement priority habitat restoration, wastewater and stormwater projects and toxic clean-ups.