

The Puget Sound Partnership's ECO Net (Education, Communication & Outreach Network) Statement of Purpose

This document is a statement of purpose for a Puget Sound-wide network that will build and strengthen relationships among organizations working on building public awareness, involvement and environmental education. Rather than a “top-down” initiative, this network is intended to be a collaboration, drawing on the combined experience and community-level knowledge of existing networks and efforts. The statement of purpose stems from an assignment given to the original Puget Sound Partnership by Governor Gregoire to figure out how to dramatically increase public awareness and involvement in Puget Sound issues. Part of the response to that assignment was to build a network of organizations that could reach and engage people on-the-ground with greater depth.

Over the summer of 2006 two meetings were held involving educators and communicators from throughout the basin to discuss formation of such a network and there was broad support to move forward with development. The final recommendation emerging from the first Partnership also included the formation of a network, as a complement and part of a larger campaign.

The draft of this statement of purpose was developed over the early spring of 2007 by a committee for consideration by the larger community and by the incoming leadership of the new Puget Sound Partnership agency. During that same period, funds were appropriated by the legislature for these purposes.

Statement of Purpose

By bringing together, in concerted effort, the skills, resources and talent of the many groups working on environmental education, communications and outreach around Puget Sound, this new Network will seek to:

- Build connections amongst and capacity within the Network's participant organizations by increasing the sharing of resources and information among members.
- Improve the ability of Network participants to more effectively deliver programs and services to protect Puget Sound.
- Engage participants in the work of the Puget Sound Partnership, particularly in development and implementation of the 2020 Action Agenda and Puget Sound education and outreach campaign.

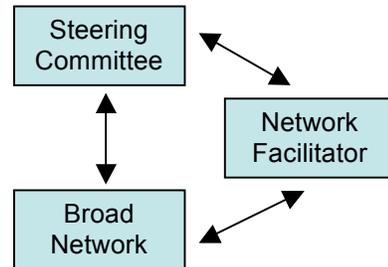
So that...

- Environmental awareness about Puget Sound among Washington's citizens increases.
- Numbers of people engaged and levels of on-the-ground public involvement in protecting Puget Sound increase.
- Human behaviors that improve and protect Puget Sound's environmental and human health increase.

Network Structure

Broad Network

The broad range of committed organizations in the ECO Network would continue to be an inclusive, diverse group of education, communication, and outreach professionals. The broad network will draw on the resources of existing smaller networks and encourage their participation.



Membership criteria

1. Affiliated with an organization/school that is involved with education, communication, or outreach of environmental themes in Puget Sound.
2. A teacher, program coordinator, volunteer, or other staff person involved with providing education, communication or outreach in Puget Sound.
3. A desire to work with others towards saving Puget Sound by improving and increasing the coordination, communication, and partnering between education, communication and outreach providers in Puget Sound.

Member Roles and Responsibilities

- Communicate regularly with steering committee members in an open, effective, and positive manner; provide input upon request.
- Share information with constituencies, and solicit feedback from them
- Participate in periodic meetings and workshops.
- Engage, to whatever extent is practicable, in sharing of information and resources with other ECO Net member organizations.
- Convey Partnership goals to the general public and the press; facilitate public participation in the process, where possible.

Steering Committee

Subset of the participants from the education, outreach and communication communities who provide regular guidance and direction and bring resources to the Network.

- Between 9 – 15 members with the right skills, time and dedication that secondarily represent a broad spectrum of sectors in the education, communication and outreach community, a broad geographical representation and cultural diversity.
- Members serve a 3 year term so that one-third of committee is refreshed every year.
- All members must appoint an alternate who can attend meetings on their behalf if unavailable.
- The 2009 Steering Committee will be made up of two-thirds existing members and one-third new members.
 - A Recruitment Team and Partnership staff will create a list of potential candidates for empty slots that will be voted on by the broader ECO Net.
 - Members can be voted in for multiple terms.

- The ECO Network steering committee would include committed individuals with management skills whose experience generally reflects the core sectors identified by the Environmental Education Association of Washington's E3 initiative:

Early childhood education	Outdoor/Env. learning	Youth and families
K-12/Teacher education	Environmental justice and	Adult education
Higher education	public health	Agricultural Education
Tribal education	Zoos, museums, and aquaria	Local government/utilities

Member Roles and Responsibilities

- Attend meetings roughly once a month to provide guidance and direction for the Partnership's work.
- Provide detailed input upon request for the Partnership's Action Agenda (in person, via email, and through other methods, as appropriate).
- Serve as liaisons between ECO Network participants, the Partnership, and the public:
 - Maintain open, effective, and positive communication with ECO Network participants.
 - Actively solicit opinions and feedback from constituents to inform decisions.
- Focus on the larger goals of the ECO Network and the Partnership over individual organization/agency agendas.

Network facilitator

To support the work of the ECO Network the Volunteer and Education manager for the Puget Sound Partnership will provide facilitation and resources to make the network active.

Facilitator Roles and Responsibilities

- Provide day-to-day support for ECO Network activities.
- Serve as a liaison between ECO Network participants and the Partnership, raising issues and concerns as needed.

Opportunities for Participants

1. Participate in the work of the new Puget Sound Partnership

- Participate in the implementation of the Puget Sound Partnership's education, communication and outreach goals and priorities.
 - Help translate and connect the public awareness campaign to local communities and adapt the campaign to a wide variety of local settings.
 - Work with other ECO Net members and Partnership staff to create strategic goals and priorities for messaging in each Action Area.
 - Provide information, training and direct experiences to citizens who respond to campaign efforts and messages.
 - Provide case studies and stories, and identify local volunteers, teachers, schools, and others to be featured in campaign messaging.

- Participate in the ongoing review of the Education, Communications and Outreach plan/chapter and initiatives.
- Provide advice, guidance and direct involvement on implementation of the 2020 Action Agenda.

2. Increase capacity, connections and sharing of information and resources amongst participating organizations through:

- An online *clearinghouse* of information and materials that:
 - organizes and makes available information and materials of use to participants;
 - serves as a resource for citizens, schools, and others who want to get involved in learning about and protecting Puget Sound;
 - provides access to community-based marketing strategies, professional communication materials and additional resources.
- Opportunities for more direct linkages and interaction and facilitating the exchange of ideas and information. Do this by:
 - participating in existing regional and statewide conferences (i.e. EEAW annual conference, Puget Sound/Georgia Basin conference, others);
 - attending the ECO Net Summit;
 - participate in other training, networking opportunities (e.g. COSEE volunteer workshops, program evaluation training, social marketing training).
- Connecting to resources of other organizations and networks with access to additional capacity (e.g. the Seattle Aquarium, COSEE, EEAW, the Washington State History Museum, WSU Extension, Washington Sea Grant) and working with existing processes such as E3 Washington.
- Opportunities to engage with potential funding partners (for example, charitable foundations and service organizations). It is recognized that this is an area that will require focused attention and development of a strategy.
- Receive a periodic electronic newsletter with timely updates on events, workshops and other information.

3. Connect network participants with educators (K-12 teachers and professors at university educator programs) to improve the health of Puget Sound by:

- Helping educators develop outcome-based Puget Sound projects at school-sites and community sites for elementary and middle school students; and high school level projects which meet the culminating project requirements for graduating seniors.
- Helping educators incorporate Puget Sound issues and actions into their instruction.

4. Help shape regional policy and practice in relationship to Puget Sound education, communication, and outreach by:

- Serve a representational and advocacy role to the new Puget Sound Partnership and other decision-makers on behalf of Network participants.
- Providing advice and input where appropriate (e.g. advising the Coastal Training Program on training needs).