

Shared Strategy Summit

January 26-27, 2005
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I want you all to join me in thinking about who we are and what we are trying to do.

We are governments at Federal, State, local and tribal levels. We are farmers and environmentalists, businessmen and women, fishers, citizens and watershed groups broadly inclusive of all the interests in their area. We are all here voluntarily. No one has told us we must join together to do this work. We have decided to work together because we know that working separately ensures only failure. We told ourselves that at Port Ludlow when many of us first met there six years ago. It is as true today as it was then.

Our goal is to recover to healthy harvestable levels Puget Sound Chinook and bull trout and Hood Canal Summer Chum all listed by either NOAA or USF&W in the decade of the 90's. We have committed to do this - all of us mentioned above - by developing a recovery plan that fulfills the dictates of the Endangered Species Act.

Government officials who are participating have not relinquished any of the duties or responsibilities they have under their governing statutes nor have the tribes given up any of their rights under the treaties with the U.S. Government signed more than a century and a half ago. These reservations of authority and duties are written into the initial terms of the Shared Strategy's declaration of common purpose.

The Endangered Species Act has stimulated our action. Our desire to control our future with healthy fish and a prosperous region is our motivation.

So if you like complexity you'll love the Shared Strategy!

We started out three years ago knowing the people of Puget Sound are not satisfied with either/or choices. They are committed to

a healthy environment and economic prosperity. The plans we have been preparing are testimony to that commitment.

We also know that a primary indicator of a healthy water environment is strong salmon runs.

Let me stop here for a minute and ask you to help me imagine a more desirable future for Puget Sound. Let's go out to 2025 and be reasonable, what could we look like:

- Puget Sound is a body of water in which all the major indices of health are on the rise.
- All the major watersheds and rivers have plentiful Chinook, bull trout or Hood Canal Summer Chum. More than we've seen in years.
- Our hatcheries are being wisely managed to supplement and enhance the wild fish.
- Harvests of salmon are carefully managed so that salmon health and abundance is preserved.
- Rural areas have prosperous salmon friendly farms and people are excited and motivated to buy produce grown in harmony with our ecosystem needs.
- Environmental regulation is clear, predictable and efficient and we all insist that it be effective to preserve what we cherish.
- Recreational and commercial fisheries feed the region's economy while fully supporting tribal fishing rights.
- Our region is more friendly to business, people and fish than it was before.

All of this and more has occurred by 2025 because of a productive, problem solving, partnership between businesses, tribes and governments and citizens working together to support a sustainable environment and economy.

This is not pie in the sky. This is possible if we work, plan and execute together.

And this is why the work we have been doing – and the plans we are preparing - are so important.

Both government and citizens have a role. These plans are responsive to the mandate of Congress under the endangered species act. The plans themselves are constructed in response to the framework created by NOAA and USF&W. NOAA and the tribes and the state F&W Department have laid out the science and set the goals which must guide our work. And most importantly, the work itself - the preparation of the watershed plans - engages the people living in and sharing the benefits and costs of our region's watersheds. Those most impacted by the plans are the ones who have developed them and made the commitments necessary to make them a reality.

In other words, we have tried from the beginning to see the development of a recovery plan as our responsibility. And by our, I mean all of us – all levels of government, including tribal government, farmers, environmentalist, business men and women and so on. All of us live in Puget Sound regardless which hat we wear and all of us have a stake in a healthy Puget Sound, abundant wild fish and economic prosperity.

We are all in the boat together. We all must construct and understand our destination and decide how we are going to get there. As we know, from time to time our commonly occupied boat has sprung leaks and there will be more of them. But since we are in the same craft, it is up to all of us to identify and fix those leaks. Let me give you some examples of potential and sometimes real leaks.

- Suppose someone sues the state or federal government over some aspect of the plan – do we all seek to defend it? Or do we leave it to the one sued?
- How do we pay for this plan?
- What assurances, regulatory or financial, will the federal and state governments give those watersheds which are making a good faith effort to implement the commitments they have made?

- What happens if three fourths of the watersheds are doing a good job of making and living up to their commitments on behalf of the fish and one fourth aren't – what happens to the one fourth?
- How do we make sure we are spending our limited resources where they will do the most good for the fish?
- How do we ensure partnerships with farmers and tribal managers?
- How do we ensure that these plans and commitments are executed?
- How do we make sure the near shore and the Sound proper are not ignored?

I could go on but you get the picture. In the next two days we will – together – try to get the answers to these and related questions. Where we can nail them down we will. Where they are partially answered or unanswered the plan itself will acknowledge that more work on those questions needs to be done. We are asking you to leave your personal agendas at the door and go to work in the next two days to save the people and fish.

Now remember this, the recovery plan must be a living document. While we must commit to work to make progress, we recognize that the plans will change as firmer answers become available. To prove or disprove the science undergirding the plan, we must monitor our results, test our hypotheses and adaptively manage the changes necessary to meet new data requirements or test new hypotheses. Our knowledge of what to do is not perfect and we should not demand perfection of our plan. We need not await perfection before we decide to act. We know enough to make a huge difference if we proceed on our current knowledge.

The most important thing we have learned over the last several years is how to work together – what we can accomplish by pulling on the oars in the same direction. The draft chapters submitted from the watersheds last June were not perfect – Surprise! Surprise! The plans we submit to NOAA and USF&W next June will not be perfect either. But they were quite good last June, better than we might have expected when we started and they are improving all the time. They are the result of thousands of individual efforts. The people who

made those efforts, listened to their fellow citizens and adjusted their lives and expectations should be praised and thanked. You should be proud of yourselves! I am amazed at how far we have come.

As our trust in one another goes up, so does the willingness to listen, to adapt what we are doing for the betterment of fish and people. Before long, people forget that someone has told them they have to adapt their watersheds to the needs of the fish and they see that such adaptation, if matched by others, improves the place – Puget Sound – we all share and makes it better not only for salmon but for all of us. Once we all realize that what we are doing is for us as well as the fish – our task becomes much easier, the government becomes irrelevant and we all take justifiable pride in what we have accomplished for ourselves.

As Sam Anderson of the King County Master Builders Association has said “The future will occur. The question is, whether we will shape it.”

If we don't, someone else will and we probably - no, I'll guarantee - we won't like it.

But to shape our future, we must work together. Working together means doing the following:

First, all of us must rise above the fray and while I've asked you to leave your personal agendas at the door, if you don't pick them up when you leave, its ok with me. Let's try it for the next two days, roll up our sleeves and identify ways to move our plans forward.

Second, be sure to raise all the questions you feel need to be answered before the plan is a reality.

Third, government agencies be sure to understand what those in the watersheds think the problems are and support the good solutions they suggest – if people are going to remain engaged in solving their problems, they first must feel empowered to act. That empowerment often comes from governments being willing to let go, to allow people to solve their own problems. They know more about

them anyway. It is a basic principle of Jeffersonian democracy and it will work for fish and people if we let it.

Fourth, environmentalists, we share your concern for a healthy Puget Sound. Help us figure out how to accomplish this consistent with the needs for adequate housing, streamlined permitting processes, healthy farm communities and positive economic incentives for doing the right thing.

Fifth, businesses, we share your desire for a prosperous region but development must be environmentally as well as economically sustainable. If, for instance, we commit to a more effective and efficient permitting system, how can we be sure that will lead to cleaner water for fish and people?

Sixth, farmers and foresters, we understand and appreciate the need to provide you the flexibility to meet your land management and profit objectives and the stewardship you have provided in the past. Help us provide support for you and still assure ourselves that your practices protect existing habitats and restore others where science tells us they are needed.

Seventh, tribal members, we respect your treaty rights and appreciate the importance of fishing to your culture and economic health. We know these processes are a strain on your resources but your leadership and commitment to the development of science and policy is essential. We need you to continue to participate in this effort at all levels from the watersheds to the highest levels of federal and state government to make our efforts inclusive and successful.

Eighth, private landowners, we recognize your private property rights and that only one segment of society should not be asked to pay for what benefits all of society – help us translate that democratic principle of fairness into rules and incentives that preserve your rights and still protect the fish.

Lastly, to all citizens, we need your actions to lessen the impact on the fish of the way you live and your support for political leaders who are attempting to help our region respond to the needs of citizens and fish. These leaders need a strong platform of public

support that will not collapse underneath them when the inevitable challenge occurs.

So working together means paying attention to how to harmonize the needs of people and fish and committing to making it part of our plan.

Last September, I finished a three year assignment on the congressionally created and Presidentially appointed National Ocean Commission. We submitted our findings and recommendations to the President on the 19th of September.

One of the recommendations was that we attempt to manage our interaction with the ocean along ecosystem based lines. While the geographic line between Washington State and British Columbia or Oregon may make political sense, it is irrational as a way to describe an ecosystem. The fish know that even if we don't. Based on that obvious fact the Commission recommended we divide up the country into major ecosystems and attempt to manage the human impact on our oceans accordingly.

We took great pains to point out the obvious but often overlooked - fact that we humans were every bit as much a part of our ecosystem as were the plants and critters with whom we share it.

Our effort in developing a recovery plan here in Puget Sound embodies the observation and recommendation of our Commission. We Puget Sound humans are part of our ecosystem and if we are going to save the salmon we must manage the whole ecosystem including human activity more wisely. We can't save the salmon at the expense of human life and prosperity and it is unthinkable that in the pursuit of our own well being, we should not take the steps to preserve our great Northwest heritage – the salmon.

Preserving ecosystems – managing them – means preserving all the goods and services ecosystems produce. Surely, one of the more important good or service of our Northwest shared ecosystem is the salmon. It is every bit as important a good or service as electricity or irrigation or recreation or drinking water or transportation or fishing. Our luck is that preserving salmon need not be at the expense of any

of these other goods and services. Salmon is a living ecosystem good that the advance in fishing technology and our human destructive potential has rendered totally dependant on us larger brained species for survival. We must show ourselves that we are up to the task. Our efforts to save the salmon may be not only noble but necessary.

Several years ago, Billy Frank, a member of the Board of Directors of the Shared Strategy and probably the most famed and fabled fighter for salmon in our region's history – all those of you who have gone to jail for salmon, please stand – said in one of his more frustrated moments at a gathering similar to this one, in which everyone was blaming everyone else for the salmon's decline, "Wait a minute, who the hell is in charge here?"

At that time, no one could answer Billy because no one knew. Now it is clear. We're in charge - all of us who share the Puget Sound ecosystem. It is up to us to save the salmon and thus ourselves by working together toward that end. If we can do that, we will have created the ability to work together to be a productive, enriching part of our ecosystem. If that ability to work together can become permanent, than so can our progress toward our shared future.