Elwha-Dungeness Watersheds
Shared Strategy Feedback for Decision Makers

I. Key Questions for Regional Summit: The following questions are important to determine the contribution of the Elwha/Dungeness watersheds to regional salmon recovery in the next ten years. Answers to these questions by the end of December 2004 will support regional consensus on the direction for Puget Sound salmon recovery at the January 2005 summit.

1. What are the long term goals for the Chinook populations in the Dungeness and Elwha watersheds? Of the habitat, harvest and hatchery conditions identified as necessary for the populations in your watershed, which can you make significant progress on in the 10-year timeframe?

2. What conditions are necessary to implement the actions identified in your 10-year timeframe? Are the conditions supported by those responsible for the implementation? If funding during the next ten years is not available for all areas where you would like to make significant progress, how would you prioritize actions?

3. What actions are necessary to achieve the protection of existing functions? What conditions must be in place to achieve protection? Are these conditions supported by those responsible for implementation?

II. Essential Decisions for Final Watershed Chapter: Based on the chapter submittal, the summer review process, and our best scientific understanding, the Technical Recovery Team and Work Group consider the following policy decisions as the most important to answer and to include in the chapter by April 30, 2004. This will increase the certainty that actions in the next ten years will move us on a trajectory toward recovery.

1. All-H integration in recovery planning efforts for the Elwha River, Dungeness River nearshore and tributaries: Demonstrate how hatchery management practices will be consistent with habitat and harvest management practices

2. Nearshore and estuary protection: the level of protection of all intact areas of nearshore (forage fish spawning beaches and habitats) and freshwater tributaries which provide functions that support Chinook, bull trout and summer chum; steps and timeline to provide protection where gaps exist

3. Estuary, riparian and floodplain restoration: a target number of projects selected from EDT analysis and other studies and steps and timeline for project implementation over the next 10 years

4. Water Quality and Quantity: Specific target actions, steps and timeline to address water quality, instream flows, scouring and related problems over the next 10 years

5. Adaptive Management: Identification of an adaptive management structure to monitor and manage progress toward recovery of Dungeness Chinook and integrated recovery planning in the Elwha/Dungeness area

III. Increasing ESU Certainty: The Technical Recovery Team suggests that addressing the following will increase the certainty of meeting ESU recovery and should be noted in the plan with a brief statement of long-term strategy to address, even if actions are not possible to develop at this time.

1. Harvest: Reconciling Pacific Salmon Treaty harvest with productivity is an overarching issue which affects other watersheds and will be addressed regionally.

2. Nearshore – Ehwha Delta: Incorporate beach nourishment from Port Angeles to Ediz Hook; conduct a preliminary assessment of the feasibility of removing the Port Angeles pipeline

IV. Highlights of Summer Review: This section summarizes our understanding of your responses to the six questions from your June submission and August discussions.

A. Information about the planning approach, conditions necessary to achieve recovery, and measurable goals

1. Planning Group: Is there a group working to complete a draft chapter?

Clallam County and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe are coordinating the effort to develop a recovery chapter. The three principal entities involved are the Dungeness River Management Team (DRMT), the North Olympic Planning Lead Entity group (NOPLE), and the team implementing the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act.

2. Recovery Conditions: **Has the watershed group identified the conditions (habitat, harvest, and hatchery) necessary to reach recovery?**

Yes. Conditions have been described in responses to the six questions submitted on June 30th, together with accompanying documents. The Dungeness planning team is employing EDT modeling and other lines of evidence.

3. Measurable Goals: Has the watershed group endorsed the planning targets as a long-term measurable goal? If not, what is their goal?

The Dungeness River Management Team endorsed planning targets for the Dungeness Chinook population on May 12, 2004. Escapement planning targets with productivity in parentheses are 4,700 (1.0) and 1,200 (3.0). Productivity is expressed as adults produced per spawner. Mean escapement 1987 – 2001 is reported as 123 (Restoring the Dungeness, 2003, p. 19).

Recovery goals for Elwha River Chinook are addressed in the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration act, Elwha River Report, and other documents. Escapement planning targets with productivity in parentheses are 17,000 (1.0) and 6,900 (4.6). Productivity is expressed as adults produced per spawner. Mean escapement from 1987 – 2001 is reported as 1,319 (Elwha Watershed Salmon Recovery Planning Efforts, June 30, 2004, p. 26)

4. Long- term contribution to ESU Recovery: What is the long term contribution of the independent spawning populations using this watershed for ESU recovery? To achieve ESU recovery, the TRT draft delisting criteria recommend that all populations show significant improvements. Also, based upon the delisting criteria, 2-4 populations in each of the five sub-regions must achieve the planning targets and other viable salmonid population parameters (VSP). These criteria are not intended to limit additional populations in each of the five regions from achieving the planning targets.

In this region of Puget Sound, to achieve the TRT delisting criteria, the Elwha River and Dungeness River Chinook populations must meet the planning targets (core population/low risk).

B. Highlights of improvements completed or underway or existing protections of ecological functions that support recovery (Note: Results for fish have not been evaluated).

1. Water Quantity: Improvements in irrigation facilities and activities, including implementation of the Trust Water Rights Agreement and projects identified in the Comprehensive Irrigation Water Conservation Plan have resulted in improving instream flows conditions for salmon by reducing irrigation consumption of Dungeness waters by more than one third in the last five years.

2. Water Quality: The implementation of Clallam County's Clean Water District multi-agency strategy is addressing water quality problems resulting from failing septic systems, stormwater management, and animal keeping practices.

3. Riparian protection and restoration: The implementation of Fish and Forest and Habitat Conservation Plans contribute to the protection and restoration of riparian functions and values that support Chinook and bull trout. Some parcels and easements for the purposes of protection and restoration have been acquired and additional actions are underway.

4. Floodplain processes: Several parcels and easements for the purposes of restoration and floodplain reconnection have been acquired in strategic portions of the lower river for the benefit of fish.

5. Regulatory protections: The implementation of each jurisdiction's Critical Areas Ordinance, Shoreline Master Program, the Clean Water District, and other regulatory and voluntary programs contribute to the protection of habitat functions and values that support

Chinook, bull trout and summer chum. The magnitude of protection of current programs has not been assessed by the Shared Strategy Work Group or the TRT.

6. Harvest Management: Low abundance of Dungeness River Chinook salmon has precluded any directed harvest with commercial gear in the Dungeness River or Bay for the past 30 years. Recreational and subsistence chinook harvest opportunities in Dungeness Bay have also been eliminated. Protective measures for summer chum are also in place. There is no directed harvest of bull trout. There is no fishery for Chinook salmon in the Elwha River and Freshwater Bay. Coho fisheries are managed to avoid Chinook by-catch.

7. Hatchery Management: Hatchery management strategies are being implemented to help achieve Chinook recovery goals in the Elwha and Dungeness rivers.

C. Significant proposals – proposed strategy that strives to significantly protect or improve an important factor for recovery with actions that can be evaluated qualitatively or quantitatively for their results for fish; total cost of proposal(s)

1. Fish passage/access: The removal of the Elwha Dam scheduled to occur in 2007 is authorized under an act of U.S. Congress and has been the subject of environmental impact statements (draft, final, and supplemental).

2. Identification of strategies and actions addressing limiting factors: Habitat conditions in the Dungeness have been diagnosed and sets of candidate actions have been identified, analyzed and prioritized based on projected outcomes using EDT. Habitat conditions and effects of strategies and actions addressing limiting factors in the Elwha have been studied and addressed in environmental impact statements.

3. Costs of habitat restoration projects have been estimated and the likelihood of implementation within 10, 11 to 20 and 20-50 year timeframes has been evaluated. The time lag between project completion and the realization of full effects is provided for several proposed actions.

4. Water Quantity and Water Quality: Participating governments approved a Watershed Plan which addressed instream flows and water quality for adoption; the plan is currently under consideration by the Board of Clallam County Commissioners.

Total Cost of Proposal:

Elwha restoration costs for the next 5 – 10 years are estimated as follows: Dam removal - $47 million; Habitat Restoration work in Lower Elwha River, Indian Creek and Little River: $2 million; Renovation of flood protection measures $1 million; Monitoring $14 million. Renovation of hatcheries and rearing costs are estimated at $10.6 million; costs for one additional FTE for harvest enforcement activities are $80,000 annually (Elwha Watershed Salmon Recovery Planning Efforts, June 30, 2004, p. 31).

Dungeness costs for projects that potentially could be implemented within 5-10 years: Estimated costs for restoration and habitat related projects are $33.3 million (of which $8.8 million is in hand); other habitat related costs are $1.1 million for 2 FTEs for land use enforcement, habitat assessment and monitoring costs, and 1 FTE for public outreach and education. Hatchery costs for a new water supply and monitoring total 2.1 million; and Harvest costs for 2 enforcement FTEs for five years are estimated at $600,000 (Dungeness Watershed Salmon Recovery Planning Notebook Contents, June 30, 2004, p. D2).

D. Poised – The watershed has designed or initiated a process that will result in the development of significant proposals to improve conditions for fish. Anticipated or resulting proposals should be included in the recovery chapter.

1. Nearshore/estuarine: Stakeholders have identified potential actions through EDT and other studies and integrated nearshore planning is occurring in concert with the North Olympic Peninsula Lead Entity group.

2. Water Quantity: A draft Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plan is being developed and reviewed by stakeholders and NOAA Fisheries; implications for salmon recovery are being considered.