

Meeting Minutes - February 6, 2008

PUGET SOUND
NEARSHORE
PARTNERSHIP



Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership Executive Committee Meeting

Cabela's
1600 Gateway Boulevard NE
Lacey, Washington 98516

Executive Committee Members Present:

Dr. Jeff Koenings, Co-Chair, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Colonel Michael McCormick, Co-Chair, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Kathy Fletcher, People for Puget Sound
Mona Thomason, US Corps of Engineers
Frank Shipley, US Geological Survey (USGS)
Fran McNair, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Josh Baldi, Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) for Jay Manning
Theresa Jennings, King County, for Ron Sims, representing Local Governments
Ginny Broadhurst, Northwest Straits Commission
Commander Manny Bautista, for Captain Reid Tanaka, US Navy
Jennifer Steger, NOAA Fisheries – Restoration Center, for Dr. Tracy Collier
Steve Tharinger, Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Steering Committee/Science Team/Implementation Team Members Present:

Tim Smith, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Mike Ramsey, Recreation and Conservation Office/Salmon Recovery Funding Board
Doug Myers, People for Puget Sound
Michael Rylko, US Environmental Protection Agency
Debby Hyde, Pierce County, Representing Local Governments
Bernie Hargrave, US Corps of Engineers, Federal Project Manager
Curtis Tanner, WDFW/USFWS, Local Project Manager
Dick Ecker, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
Randy Shuman, Nearshore Science Team
Jacques White, The Nature Conservancy
Charles Simenstad, Nearshore Science Team
Guy Gelfenbaum, Nearshore Science Team
George Hart, for Daniel Hayes, US Navy

Staff:

Debbie Rick, WDFW
Toni Lick, WDFW

Others:

Valerie Gow, Puget Sound Meeting Services (Recording Secretary)

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CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Jeff Koenings, Co-chair, Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership, called the meeting to order at 12:31 p.m. Dr. Koenings welcomed everyone to the Executive Committee meeting. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

AGENDA REVIEW

Mr. Tim Smith reviewed the meeting agenda, noting that the meeting time was changed for increased efficiency and that additional time was built into the agenda to allow for the Executives to discuss and exchange information on each of the topics.

Due to a number of changes and transitions within Partnership organizations over the last six months, it was recommended that a list of committee member assignments be made at the summer Executive Committee meeting.

Ms. Ginny Broadhurst was recognized as the new Executive Director of the Northwest Straits Commission.

STATUS OF THE Puget Sound NEARSHORE PARTNERSHIP

Objective: The Executive Committee remains apprised of the GI study status and is informed of major near term tasks and accomplishments.

PSNERP General Investigation Study

The Nearshore Puget Sound Partnership was established in 2001 with the signing of a Cost-Share Agreement for the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project between the State of Washington represented by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the District Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who is now represented by Colonel Michael McCormick.

Congress has authorized the Corps of Engineers to conduct a General Investigation (GI) study of ecosystem restoration of the Puget Sound Basin. The GI Study is the typical way for the Corps of Engineers to work with a non-federal sponsor (WDFW) to study a large water resource issue. The nearshore project is larger than the typical GI study. It is also recognized that the study's timeline is long and that there is a great deal of uncertainty in science relating to the nearshore than what the Corps of Engineers would typically experience in a GI study.

Since 2001, much has been learned. At the onset, the Nearshore Science Team (NST) was formed as an interdisciplinary science body to synthesize the science coming from various scientific disciplines into something more cohesive to provide guidance to restoration practitioners.

Stage I was completed in Fall 2001 through Spring 2004. This work is characterized as the program tools and structure that will lead to an understanding of the fundamental physical environmental problems that Puget Sound is experiencing.

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It was anticipated Stage II work would be completed between Spring 2004 and Fall 2006. However, the projection for completion of Stage II is now anticipated by Fall 2008 with the completion of the Strategic Needs Report (SNAR). The SNAR will identify in a spatially explicit manner the physical problems that are leading to the decline of the Puget Sound basin. This part of the GI Study will tell the story to the nation of the ecological downward slope of Puget Sound health.

Stage III is the element determining what should be done to turn around the decline, increase the productivity of the ecology, and where formulation begins for restoration solutions. This work is anticipated to start in Summer 2008, and continue through the Winter 2010.

The GI Study culminates in the Final Feasibility Report convincing the nation that the problem has been identified and that something feasible can be accomplished to turn things around. If done properly, it will eventually lead to a large-scale construction authority to help bring about some of those solutions that are identified in the report.

Recent accomplishments within Strategic Needs Assessment

One of the fundamental pieces of the analysis for the assessment is documenting the historical ecological condition of the shorelines of Puget Sound and comparing the information to current shoreline conditions, as well as identifying information gaps. The idea is to focus on goods and services provided by the shoreline areas where restoration actions will be most beneficial.

An elaborate Sound-wide Change Analysis has been developed by the NST, which will analyze all 2,500 miles of Puget Sound shoreline. A consultant, Anchor Environmental, was hired to assist in the production mode.

Early products under development include data discovery consisting of data analysis of all existing data sets that could apply to the change analysis followed by a report documenting which data sets should be used for the analysis. The consultant also discovered that many of the comprehensive data sets were developed through local, smaller studies that were combined into a geographic information system framework. As the team begins to review the data, the team is discovering significant data gaps. For example, shoreline armoring, which impedes ecological processes includes about 200 miles of shoreline that needs to be studied – shoreline armoring in those 200 miles has not been evaluated.

In collaboration, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) is looking at characterizing the current conditions of the shoreline of Puget Sound. NWIFC discovered that the NST had created a naming convention, e.g. a typology, and joined the team. NWIFC is undertaking the current conditions of that typology, while the Anchor Environmental group is working on the historic naming convention. Within the next several months, drift cell mapping should be completed as well as the typology.

Recent accomplishments within Future Without Project analysis

One other large area that is part of the Corps' GI Study is looking to the future with a planning horizon of approximately 50 years to determine what the future will look like if the Corps' GI does not lead to a large-scale construction authority, and then if it does. The difference in the

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ecological benefits that are derived from “without project condition” and “with project condition” is really what compels the nation to take an action.

To gain a better understanding of all the drivers in a 15,000 square-mile area that is diverse in economy as well as ecological diversity as Puget Sound, the team joined with University of Washington Urban Ecology Research Center to begin looking at different scenarios. There are basically ten key drivers in the future. Two of the drivers are human behavior and climate change. Different storylines were developed around different areas of Puget Sound. The team is hopeful that the storylines about what the future could do will help will inform conversations with stakeholder teams in the future.

Recent accomplishments in communicating Nearshore Science

The Steering Committee indicated that the focus of the Nearshore GI Study on the restoration of the nearshore ecosystem process requires some way to translate the importance of restoring nearshore ecosystem process to a currency or a vernacular that is more commonly understood by a broader range of stakeholders. VECs are elements of the nearshore ecosystem that the team believe people will be able to connect with. The elements were derived from discussions with the Steering Committee.

The currency chosen was described as a “Valued Ecosystem Component (VEC).” After much discussion, it was determined to poster nine VECs – Native Shellfish, Great Blue Herons, Marine Forage Fish, Beaches and Bluffs, Orcas, Marine Riparian Vegetation, Kelp and Eelgrass, Pacific Salmon, and Nearshore Birds. A tenth VEC was added as a result of a question from Bill Ruckelshaus, regarding human value or “Valuing Puget Sound’s Valued Ecosystem Components.”

The team contracted with experts in those VECs and asked them to summarize and synthesize the existing peer review literature for the nine VECs and how they are related to and support the nearshore ecosystems to be restored. The NST member representing Social Science wrote the human value paper. The Nearshore Science Team recently completed the publication of ten technical reports on Value Ecosystem Components (VECs).

A regional topical subject expert produced each of the VEC white papers. Each paper includes the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project’s signature conceptual model. The conceptual models begin to identify an understanding of how restoration actions can provide benefits to the VECs. Additionally, some of the stressors have been identified to help determine the focus of restoration activities. All the papers conclude with a discussion on the importance of the data gaps that could be the focus of ongoing research and investigation. All the documents have completed an external peer review.

Distribution of the technical reports is primarily available through the Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership’s website, www.pugetsoundnearshore.org and CDs. However, hard copies are also available on a limited basis and through the Washington State library system.

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Discussion:

Ms. Mona Thomason suggested providing the technical reports to the national system as well Mr. Tanner acknowledged the request.

Mr. Baldi offered that most of the public would not read the technical reports. He suggested developing a short public document. Mr. Tanner responded that language for a four-page synopsis of the technical reports has been drafted for distribution to the general public. The technical reports are important to the Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership's portfolio when members contact congressional members to pursue funding opportunities for restoration projects. Mr. Tanner said there would be ten four-page documents representing each of the technical reports. He acknowledged the desire to develop one four-page document to ensure the information is more accessible to everyone.

Mr. Baldi commented that his agency is on the front edge of approving local Shoreline Management Plans and it is hoped that the technical research will support new ways of doing business on the shoreline. The Nearshore Partnership and its charge is one of many components. It would be good service to distill the information to key information on the nearshore. Mr. Tanner said the VEC technical reports stop short of speaking to the management implications of the information. A clean line was drawn as much as possible between the peer review literature and the management implications. Given the relationship between forage fish and beaches, the question is how to manage shorelines. One of the projects WDFW is currently working on is using the technical information in the development of guidelines for nearshore areas. A pilot project was completed providing some preliminary guidance. The information has been provided to others that are picking up the science and translating the information into management implications.

Recent accomplishments on assessing Nearshore science

One of the things important to the program in addition to having a science-based approach is ensuring the science is clear and transparent and has been externally reviewed. One of the messages that the NST sent to the program managers is that in addition to the peer review on documents, there is a need to subject the entire program and its technical approach to a programmatic peer review process. Programmatic Peer Review is increasingly common in national ecosystem restoration programs. The Corps of Engineers' policy in the Water Resources Development Management Act (WRDA) 2007, mandates the Corps to undertake peer review as part of its general investigation studies.

The NST developed a peer review proposal to the project management team.. Mr. Hargrave forwarded the proposal to the Corps' National Center of Excellence. The Nearshore Partnership received a favorable response from the Center indicating that the type of peer review in the proposal should be applied to the Corps' programs. An expert review panel will be convened consisting of representatives from other national programs as well as individuals with areas of expertise. The panel will meet once or twice a year based on the amount of material to be reviewed. The NST recommends the peer review panel report to the Nearshore Partnership Executive Committee to maintain the link between the panel experts, program managers, and the Steering Committee. It is important that the external programmatic peer review proves the methods and science behind the recommendations of the formulation plan are legitimate.

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Discussion:

Dr. Koenings questioned how the process of selecting the peer review panel would be undertaken. He asked about the need for frequent meetings of the panel.

Mr. Tanner reported the number meetings would depend on the amount of material to be reviewed. It may be necessary to convene the panel twice this year rather than only once. The panel will likely need a week of preparation followed by two to three days of meetings.

Mr. Si Simenstad added that there is a volume of background material that will need to be reviewed. There are some critical timelines and turning points in the process that need to be achieved. After the initial catch-up work is completed, the panel may only need to meet once annually.

Ms. Thomason said the guidance lays out the peer review process. The Corps will provide nominations and suggestions but the approval authority will reside with the panel. She indicated Congress wants the process to be independent and external of the Corps of Engineers. The issue is seeking experts outside the Corps of Engineers.

Mr. Simenstad noted the NST is recommending some criteria to help the Corps provide guidance for the panel selection.

Mr. Tanner said the Nearshore Partnership's peer review process is leading the way for the Corps of Engineers to implement its peer review requirements under the new law. The Nearshore Partnership's approach for peer review will be a model for the Corps' GI studies.

Recent accomplishments on maintaining a National Presence

Another important accomplishment is maintenance of national presence for Puget Sound and the Nearshore GI Study. The Nearshore Partnership believes strongly that there is a story to tell and is leading the way in ecosystem restoration in the Puget Sound region. As NST members attend conferences across the country, there have been reports that people are interested in the way PSNERP is tackling the problem. There is also the importance of keeping the nation apprised of that fact that Puget Sound is a resource of national interest and not just a regional problem or regional resource. PSNERP is investing in keeping Puget Sound on the national radar screen as well as its methods and analytical approaches.

Examples include participation in a national conference between The Nature Conservancy and the Corps of Engineers. The Nearshore Partnership is also a sponsor of Restore America's Estuary Conference. A proposal was submitted for the Nearshore Partnership to host a series of "restoration coffee houses" consisting of Puget Sound representatives along with national counterparts for a panel discussion on major conference themes. The conference is scheduled for October 11-15, 2008, in Providence, Rhode Island. Additionally, a dedicated poster session is proposed consisting of eight posters.

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The Next Six Months

Ongoing efforts are leading to the completion of Stage II – the Strategic Needs Assessment: identifying what’s “broken and where” across 2,500 miles of Puget Sound shoreline. The goal is to complete the report in the next six months as well as completion of some initial analysis for some of the sub-basins in Puget Sound.

Another effort is refining the program’s work plan and laying out the details of Stage III to allow predictability of greater accuracy in the next steps to complete the program, costs, and completion dates. The information will be used to revise the feasibility cost share agreement that was originally signed in 2001.

There are also efforts to increase the degree of involvement of stakeholders within the program, specifically moving from defining the problem to developing the solution. To do that, specific restoration objectives will need to be developed – how much of the identified problem should be collectively addressed. It is important to ensure stakeholders are involved in that aspect of the conversation. Stakeholder groups will be established.

One test conducted last October with the team was an effective technique used by the Corps and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on cleanup projects. A large-group exercise challenged individual citizens to draw what they would like to see in a future at a specific location. Citizens are provided the opportunity to have a graphic artist illustrate their respective suggestions and products that they would like to see. The artist creates composites of what he has heard and has viewed from the participants. The team’s drawings will be available on the website: www.pugetsoundnearshore.org

Discussion:

Ms. Fletcher questioned the timeline and the ultimate objective of securing a federal authorization. She asked where the timeline converges with legislation and if there is a target year for a congressional authorization.

Mr. Hargrave said the target date is 2010. The Water Resource Development Act passed in November 2007 and congressional staff is working on establishing a two-year schedule. In 2008, some congressional staff indicated they would create a second WRDA to take care of the backlog because of the length of the deliberations to adopt the 2007 WRDA. The Corps recommends readying for the 2010 timeframe acknowledging that many things need to be factored. It might mean pursuing a request for a conditional approval.

Ms. Fletcher asked whether the timeline is achievable. Mr. Hargrave reported the federal budget received a second year of very high funding. However, there are many unknowns that must be worked. The Corps of Engineers has an aggressive schedule and it requires continuing at the current funding level to achieve the 2010 window. There is one year dedicated to the plan formulation process. Many people who have much experience have indicated the timeline is very aggressive. The report process will entail approximately one year.

Colonel McCormick suggested the need to focus on completing a thorough report with the understanding of the need to meet the timeline. The report must demonstrate that the project is

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worthy of investment. It is important to stick to the science and the process to the extent possible to ensure a good report is developed.

Ms. Fetcher asked if there is something more or additional that should be undertaken now to ensure a good product. Ms. Thomason said as the process moves closer to the feasibility report, it will be important to ensure the science is there. Additionally, for the process to support an authorization, the report must be policy-compliant as well. She said she is unsure whether a methodology has been developed for calculating the benefits of the various alternatives. It must be a quantitative scientific-based analysis of the alternatives. She expressed nervousness for formulation in the next year when it is unknown how comparisons will be made.

Mr. Smith responded to Ms. Fletcher's questions and commented on the timing of the process both by the Nearshore Partnership and the Corps of Engineers. There will be some pressure in the next six months to a year to determine how to complete the cost obligations.

Mr. Hargrave said everyone will continue to struggle with how to do it right, secure funding necessary to complete the work to the degree that everyone wants, as well as struggling with staff capacity. A firm was hired with the intent to help build production capacity. However, all of the groups working on the study are maximized to the extent possible. Currently, there is a staff shortfall and the issue is finding staff to bring all the pieces of the study to make a compelling GI study.

Mr. Tanner advised that the Implementation Team is the most short-staffed at this time. Doug Myers' participation has been increased. His leadership has been requested for assisting in the definition of the Needs Assessment Analysis; that is the piece of the program that is in most need of additional support.

The Implementation Team is responsible for taking the science products and putting them on the ground in two specific places. First is the translation of those science products into the Strategic Needs Assessment Report. Secondly, to translate the information to on-the-ground restoration projects. One of the early decisions the program made was to consciously invest limited human and financial resources into early action projects, knowing that would take some effort from completing the GI Study. Executive members were asked to consider how to provide additional support to the program.

Mr. Hargrave commented on the critical assistance provided by Hugh Shipman with the Department of Ecology.

Mr. Baldi cautioned against having nearshore restoration undercut lack of protection. It is just as important for the Nearshore Partnership to support the protection side. The issue is how both processes complement each other. The question is how to begin to have a more complimentary reinforcing picture of all the resources available.

Dr. Koenings suggested developing a timeline so that everyone is on track with what needs to occur and by what date. Mr. Tanner said there has always been a pathway, but over the years it has been refined as the tasks become clearer and more defined. The Corps of Engineers high-

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level process has always been understood; however, as the Nearshore Partnership takes its program and intersects with the requirements of the Corps of Engineers process, the development of increasingly detailed timelines and budgets has occurred. It may be aggressive, but the effort is on track for the 2010 WRDA. Efforts will continue to maintain a fairly aggressive approach in managing the program.

Dr. Koenings asked what could be provided to give some confidence to members that the timeline can be achieved. Mr. Tanner replied a revised timeline was provided to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is still asking questions about the timeline and he anticipates providing the timeline to the Executive Committee in ~~August~~ September.

Discussion ensued on the need for assistance in achieving the timeline, defining what type of help is necessary, previous work plans that have fleshed out the work necessary in each stage, and the need to share with the Executive Committee in ~~August~~ September how the effort will formulate feasible alternatives and how to convince the nation through a series of reviews to accept the recommendations.

Dr. Koenings reminded everyone to consider the political process that goes hand-in-hand with the science and products. Mr. Hargrave replied that it would be important to ensure that the full investigation and the report that comes with it meet expectations. Dr. Koenings stressed the important of synchronizing both the study process and politics to ensure a successful effort.

Mr. Tanner said one thing that the Nearshore Partnership completed was the delivery of a scoping paper to Puget Sound Partnership staff to include identification of the Strategic Needs Assessment as one of the deliverables that will be brought forward. There is an understanding of the political pressure and NST members have set aside tasks to focus on completion of the change analysis and other work that needs to be done. The Nearshore program's contributions to the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda will be the understanding of what needs to be fixed from the nearshore habitat piece.

Mr. Jacques White said as the process moves forward there is a joint effort to complete Stage II. At some point it will largely become a Corps of Engineers task and there will be fewer entities outside the Corps of Engineers. He asked everyone to consider if they have the capacity to assist the Corps of Engineers in marshalling whatever resources are needed to complete the project.

Mr. Smith emphasized how critical it is to ensure that completion of a long-term feasibility study remains focused on ensuring the program remains relevant to whatever the political issues are of the day. There are some tremendous contributions the project can offer from climate change to sea level rise, and there are things that can be done to contribute to biodiversity as well as to other national programs.

Dr. Koenings said he wants to ensure that what is developed is relevant and useful because it will ensure political support is received.

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ESTUARY AND SALMON RESTORATION PROGRAM (ESRP)

Objective: The executive Committee is familiar with the ESRP 2007 implementation process and results. ESRP Program managers have benefit of Executives input as they make plans for future funding rounds.

Highlights of the 2007 Report to the Legislature

Mike Ramsey briefed members on the highlights of the 2007 Report to the Legislature, coordinated project review with Puget Sound acquisition funds, project contract coordination with Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), and future direction of the program. He referred members to the 2007 Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program brochure and described the previous funding levels the program has received. The brochure includes a list of the restoration projects, accomplishments, and funding level.

Discussion:

Dr. Koenings commented that the brochure has been very beneficial during several meetings with state senators.

Dr. Koenings shared information on the legislative meetings. Mr. Smith provided additional information on the comments received from legislators. Legislators expressed an interest in trying to figure out a way for legislators to receive more ownership in projects. Some legislators indicated a desire to review the project list prior to appropriating funding rather than receiving a report after funding has been allocated. He commented on the issue of frontloading the process.

Ms. Fran McNair added that it has been her experience that legislators rarely make any changes.

Discussion ensued on how to involve the Legislature without impeding the process, grant cycle timelines, and the legislative budget appropriation timeline.

Ms. Ginny Broadhurst complimented staff on the brochure. The Northwest Straits Commission has recently agreed to fund one of the ESRP projects.

Coordinated Project Review

Mr. Ramsey referred to a letter (meeting material packet) from Paul Cereghino with a list of all proposed ESRP projects. The letter speaks about the coordination between the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and the ESRP. Some of the projects received dual funding from SRFB and ESRP. The SRFB received an additional \$40 million for Puget Sound restoration projects and the budget proviso language requires the coordination of projects with Puget Sound Partnership and the Nearshore Partnership. Coordination occurred with the Steering Committee in August. Applications were due in mid-September 2007. The SRFB Review Panel allocated \$16.9 million in November for Puget Sound restoration, acquisition, and assessment projects. The project list provided is prioritized by the ESRP ranking through its technical review process. Both entities sent letters to the SRFB confirming coordination occurred. The remaining funds were allocated to upland and freshwater projects.

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Future Direction

The future direction of the program include: continued collaboration with core partners in leveraging funds, and advancing the GI Study. The program does not include administrative costs; subsequently staff from other entities have been borrowed to administer the program. There is also a request for some participation by the Executive Committee members for a discussion on how to expand the ESRP program.

Discussion:

Ms. Fletcher said there appears to be an unmet need for administering the program, especially if the program is expanded. A request to add staff should be a component of the funding request.

Members discussed involvement by the Legislature. There were positive comments and some reservations for involving legislators in the process because of lobbying for projects outside of scientific consideration, legislative timing and budget appropriation, grant agency timelines, and potentially assisting the Corps to gain additional capacity. Mr. Tanner advised that state resources are used to support the ESRP and if ESRP staffing could be resolved, it would free up time for resources required on the GI Study and maintaining the program capacity.

Mr. White said expanding the program is important because at some point there will be success in obtaining authorization from the federal government to pursue a major restoration initiative in Puget Sound. There will be match requirements associated with that as well. There needs to be some vehicle to advanced known specific scientifically-based projects for funding. They likely will not be projects of the \$1.5 to \$2 million range, but projects of a higher funding level. This program is needed as a mechanism for the potential to serve as the matching requirement.

Mr. Smith referred to the interest by some legislators in the project list. Some legislators have indicated they are not interested in reordering the projects but are interested in obtaining credit for voting for funding for projects in their respective district. Not knowing the specific funded projects makes it difficult for legislators to receive credit. Ms. Fletcher added that legislators might also be more motivated to increase funding if their projects are below the funding line.

Dr. Koenings indicated interaction with legislators has been very positive.

Future Directions:

Colonel McCormick asked if there is a willingness by members to be a part of the strategic discussion to expand the program: Ms. Fletcher, Ms. McNair, and Ms. Broadhurst volunteered to assist.

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2009 AGENCY FUNDING

Objective: Executive Committee understands the wide-range of federal agency activities related to Puget Sound nearshore restoration, and concurs with WDFW's recommendations for Congressional requests.

Mr. Smith reviewed FY09 federal funding requests and referred to the ongoing transition process associated with the completion of the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda and coordination of federal funding requests:

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Core Program

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project

FY09 Request Amount: \$1.9 million (President's budget is \$400,000)
FY08 Appropriation Amount: \$ 1.279 million
Brief Description: Corps G.I. to identify large-scale nearshore restoration programs
Scale (N, S, R, L): Regional
Lead Fed Agency: Corps of Engineers – Bernie Hargrave
Local Match Required: Yes
Local Contact: WDFW – Curtis Tanner

Supporting Programs making a direct contribution to Nearshore Partnership activities

Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters

FY09 Request Amount: \$1.800 million
FY08 Appropriation Amount: \$1.56 million
Brief Description: Supports administration/activities of local Marine Resource Committees
Scale (N, S, R, L): Local
Lead Fed Agency: NOAA/Sanctuaries
Local Match Required: No
Local Contact: Ecology/NWSC – Ginny Broadhurst

Coastal Habitats in Puget Sound (USGS)

FY09 Request Amount: \$20 million? (Puget Sound - \$.600 million; also, Lower Columbia)
FY08 Appropriation Amount: \$17 million? (\$.838 million – Washington)
Brief Description: Provides support to 28 National Estuary Programs
Scale (N, S, R, L): National
Lead Fed Agency: EPA
Local Match Required: Yes
Local Contact: PSP – David Dicks

Mr. Frank Shipley said USGS committed to process-based science and has the building blocks to complete larger-scale Sound restoration projects.

Community-Based Restoration Program

FY09 Request Amount: \$1.0 million
FY08 Appropriation Amount: \$.800 million (?)
Brief Description: Web-based, GIS project tracking and management tool
Scale (N, S, R, L): Statewide
Lead Fed Agency: USFWS – Kate Benkert
Local Match Required: No
Local Contact: WDFW – Erik Neatherlin

Ms. Fletcher reported there are other funds from the Community-Based Restoration Program that are received in Puget Sound. She cited the sources and partnerships that bring funds to Puget Sound. The amount of funding may not be totally predictable on a yearly basis, but it has generated projects in Puget

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Sound.

Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

FY09 Request Amount: \$90 million (Washington State: TBD)
FY08 Appropriation Amount: \$67 million (Washington State request: \$25.0 - \$27.5 million)
Brief Description: Funds habitat, harvest and hatchery projects related to recovery
Scale (N, S, R, L): National
Lead Fed Agency: NOAA/NMFS
Local Match Required: Yes
Local Contact: Recreation and Conservation Office – Kaleen Cottingham

There is a coalition of people who work on the program actively. They use the funds to help leverage funds to implement some of the ESRP projects.

Related Programs

Puget Sound Partnership

FY09 Request Amount: \$30 million
FY08 Appropriation Amount: \$20 million
Brief Description: Funds administration and activities related to PSP Action
Agenda
Scale (N, S, R, L): Regional
Lead Fed Agency: EPA, Section 320 – Tom Eaton
Local Match Required: Yes
Local Contact: Puget Sound Partnership – David Dicks

Northwest Straits Initiative

FY09 Request Amount: \$1.800 million
FY08 Appropriation Amount: \$1.56 million
Brief Description: Supports administration/activities of local Marine Resource
Committees
Scale (N, S, R, L): Local
Lead Fed Agency: NOAA/Sanctuaries
Local Match Required: No
Local Contact: Ecology/NWSC – Ginny Broadhurst

National Estuary Program

FY09 Request Amount: \$20 million? (Puget Sound - \$.600 million; also, Lower Columbia)
FY08 Appropriation Amount: \$17 million? (\$.838 million – Washington)
Brief Description: Provides support to 28 National Estuary Programs
Scale (N, S, R, L): National
Lead Fed Agency: EPA
Local Match Required: Yes
Local Contact: PSP – David Dicks

Habitat Work Schedule

FY09 Request Amount: \$1.0 million

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FY08 Appropriation Amount: \$.800 million (?)
Brief Description: Web-based, GIS project tracking and management tool
Scale (N, S, R, L): Statewide
Lead Fed Agency: USFWS – Kate Benkert
Local Match Required: No
Local Contact: WDFW – Erik Neatherlin

The information table is provided to inform members about the full range of funding requests that have been submitted. A meeting was held recently on coordination of federal funding requests beyond the Nearshore Partnership. There was a commitment to account for all the projects that are authorized in the Corps of Engineers program for Puget Sound restoration activities to list them in one place as well as understanding where the funding requests are within the funding process. With the Puget Sound Partnership, there will be review of priority projects that should be pursued for appropriation.

Discussion:

Mr. Baldi suggested several programs, such as the Coastal Zone Management Act, National Estuary Reserve Program, and the Coastal and Estuary Lands and Conservation Program might fit well with the priority funding effort.

Mr. Smith said the list is a different approach in an attempt to include everything on one list while leaving it individually to members to communicate their priorities while pursuing funding. The purpose of the list is to assist WDFW in pursuing funding for nearshore programs.

Ms. Thomason commented on the Executive Order issued on earmarks. All executive agencies have been ordered to ignore anything that is not in bill language, which would apply to the 2008 supplemental budget.

Mr. Dick Ecker suggested leveraging some of the other agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security and the renewal energy bill to invest in Puget Sound. A portion of the Department of Energy's budget will be focused on Puget Sound. What is likely to occur is the development of tools that will be applied to the nearshore project and the Puget Sound Partnership.

Mr. Smith asked members to submit general requests if there are projects that fit well within the list.

COORDINATION WITH PUGET SOUND PARTNERSHIP

Objective: The work of PSNERP needs to contribute to the mission of the Puget Sound Partnership. The Nearshore Partnership has been working to coordinate with this new agency, and the Executive Committee should be informed of these efforts to date, and the Executives should provide guidance for the future of this important relationship.

There is every indication and reason for a close relationship between the Nearshore Partnership and Puget Sound Partnership. A group of members met with the Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council in Tukwila in December 2007. The Partnership provided a thorough presentation on where it believes it intersects with Puget Sound Partnership and what types of

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services and products can be provided.

The presentation focused on identifying natural processes that support nearshore ecosystems, understanding “what’s broken and where” and determining where processes need protection and restoration. All of the Nearshore Partnership’s products will be helpful to the Puget Sound Partnership as it develops a recovery plan and the Action Agenda for Puget Sound.

Memberships to committees in both partnerships often overlap. There are members of the Nearshore Science Team and members of the Partnership’s Science Panel, that are working with technical work groups to help develop the Action Agenda. There are members of the Steering Committee and the Executive Committee who are on the Ecosystem Coordination Board. The Chairman of the Leadership Council, Bill Ruckelshaus, and the Director of the Puget Sound Partnership are both members of the Nearshore Partnership’s Executive Committee.

Mr. White reported the Nearshore Partnership could offer relationships with diverse partners, science-based approach and technical tools, funding mechanisms, strategic investments and increased capacity, and offer lessons learned from early action and construction projects. The element that the Nearshore Partnership can provide in the Action Agenda is a completed feasibility report with prioritized restoration actions, identified large-scale projects, and a construction authority through the Corps. The Steering Committee and Project Management Team have discussed the issues and wants to advance them for consideration by the Executive Committee.

WDFW (and Corps) to make commitments on behalf of the Nearshore Partnership

Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda

The Nearshore Partnership is involved in habitat protection and habitat restoration across the sub-basins at the Puget Sound basin scale. Also, the Nearshore Partnership is involved in biodiversity and issues of species recovery as well as contributing to building and sustaining capacity.

The request for information to populate the Action Agenda matrix did not come to the Nearshore Partnership; it was sent to the WDFW, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the Department of Ecology. It is important the Executive Committee is aware WDFW is willing to make commitments for the Nearshore Partnership to the Action Agenda. Concurrently, the commitment is not made in isolation but with a commitment and support of the Nearshore Partnership.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is organizing its response to the Puget Sound Partnership to populate the Action Agenda. The basic approach is around a matrix of objectives, #1 Protect Habitat, #2 Restore Habitat Function, #3 Reduce Toxics, #4 Reduce Nutrients/Pathogens; #5 Manage Storm Water, #5 Provide Water, #6 Protect Biodiversity/ Recover Species; and #8 Build/Sustain Capacity within each of the seven sub-basins (Strait of Juan deFuca, San Juan Islands, Whidbey Island, North Central Puget Sound, South Central Puget Sound, South Puget Sound, Hood Canal), including an eighth, which is the entire Puget Sound basin as a whole. Currently, the Department is in the process of inventorying existing activities,

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identifying major problems and opportunities that have been identified in the matrix, identifying what some priority actions are in response, and integrating it into the state's '09 budget development process, which is also a component of the Action Agenda.

The Department of Ecology (DOE) is also completing a request from the Puget Sound Partnership. A 30-page document has been drafted, but is on hold pending the risk assessment. The current request is what the DOE's existing actions are. The DOE is taking the work in the current 07-09 plan. Josh Baldi asked if WDFW is going a step further because Ecology's sense is not to develop a new list of actions before the risk assessment and prioritization process is completed.

Ms. Debby Hyde reported Pierce County just recently received the request to complete the matrix. She said it would be helpful to know the question that is being answered with the inventory form. Mr. Baldi said there are eight objectives in the statute as previously reviewed. It simply is asking to identify existing activities. The Department of Ecology is completing the inventory Sound wide and not by action areas.

Discussion followed on different agency response to the Action Agenda request. Members offered information on how their respective agency is responding to the request. Dr. Koenings pointed out that the Puget Sound Partnership would rely on and use existing programs and move them forward in a coordinated effort.

Risk Assessment Discussion

Mr. White described the risk analysis effort. The risk analysis is trying to assess the entire watershed and there are not many comprehensive data sets evaluating the different components in term of their status.

The risk assessment model advances the recovery work of both Partnerships. If the risk assessment model will provide a tool at the scale of each of the seven action areas in having a general understanding where toxics control, stormwater control, and nearshore habitat restoration needs to happen, and if the Nearshore Partnership delivers the list of restoration actions for each of the seven basins, then it is better understood where it fits in with the overall list. The list will be different for each of the seven basins.

Mr. Baldi commented that there are many expectations around the risk assessment and how it might help prioritize the most important actions. It potentially has implications for the work by the Nearshore Partnership in terms of toxics cleanup versus prevention versus estuary restoration and other actions.

The deadline for the Risk Assessment is September 1, 2008, which really means by the middle of summer. Theoretically, the nine Science Panel members are going to guide the peer review and guide the scientific support and underpinnings of the review process. Considering the deadline for the Action Agenda and the 2020 restoration – The process for creating a risk assessment takes between 12 to 18 months to do it properly. The Puget Sound Partnership is somehow going to abstract a four-month version to meet the deadline.

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Mr. White said this is one reason for the discussion at the Steering Committee to advance early actions and completing the feasibility study as the initial actions within the Action Agenda because there has been a methodical and careful approach.

Members discussed timing of the risk assessment and the importance of ensuring it is completed properly. Other aspects of the Action Agenda will include recommendations on what needs to happen along with a proposed structure to complete the work.

Mr. Smith expressed concern about the risk assessment in that there are numerous programs delivering funds into a suite of activities and that generally speaking, federal appropriation committees are not necessarily looking for the best things to fund. If for instance, the risk assessment indicates storm water is more important than toxic cleanup or habitat restoration, the program is at jeopardy of funds going to California or other states. He said he hopes that someone is looking at the messaging side of risk assessment and not just the technical exercise component.

Ms. Thomason said there was discussion previously about conducting a more holistic approach beyond habitat restoration for the GI Study. If the study or data shows that something must be undertaken first in order for habitat restoration to be successful, the chances of getting the report through Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and securing an authorized project are very slim. OMB will want to know how "Action A" will be completed so that funds are not wasted on habitat restoration if stormwater issues have not been resolved. OMB will not approve the report if a formal risk assessment points to the success of habitat restoration dependent upon something else. Mr. Smith said it is a risk as the same thing could happen on the stormwater side.

Mr. White acknowledged the comments and suggested the issues will not be resolved. It is unlikely the output from the risk assessment will value stormwater higher than habitat restoration. There will be a possibility of taking the risk assessment to the public for input on whether the assessment is measuring the right things of importance to the public. The public will be invited to weigh in, which may be the point where there is societal prioritization. This means that all groups need to pay attention to the issue and not ignore the effort. Mr. Smith acknowledged the need to continually consider all the needs across all the objectives.

Mr. Tanner said he believes the Puget Sound Leadership Council understands that there is a need for the delivery of agency functions throughout Puget Sound. It is a complicated problem. It is likely the Council is not considering it as a linear problem but is considering the right mix of the delivery of parallel programs and integration of parallel programs. It is about dialing in the right amount of each of the programs within each of the basins and there may be some specific locations where there is a need for sequential action.

Another issue is the institutional capacity – the ability to deliver the identified amount of government service in different places. Consequently, it will result in moving forward to the next piece. Dr. Koenings added that certain areas would be funded over others because of the process. He cited the example of Hood Canal and removal of septic systems. There may be funding available to remove septic systems but there is huge resentment by the local community

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to pursue that effort. The question is whether to hold up other actions because of one process that is not occurring in a timely fashion.

Mr. Hargrave questioned the accountability issue of the Corps and the Nearshore Partnership. Mr. Smith replied that it is important that the Executive Committee knows that the Nearshore Partnership is offering to be responsible for facilitating the process. Dr. Koenings commented on the needs of the Puget Sound Partnership and immediate next steps. The Nearshore Partnership and agencies will need to help them develop performance measures and accountability tools.

There is also a commitment that Mr. White spoke to regarding supporting the Puget Sound Partnership by completing the GI Study and seeking the authority to implement the actions that will be identified.

WRAP-UP

Dr. Koenings asked staff to provide a revised pathway to 2010 with an emphasis on any hinge points in funding, policy, or process.

Mr. Smith asked members to notify him of any agenda items for the ~~August~~ September meeting.

Mr. Tanner said it would be helpful for members to share thoughts about the effectiveness and efficiency of the Executive Committee meetings.

Mr. White complimented the work of Mr. Tanner, Mr. Hargrave, and Mr. Ramsey, and Mr. Smith for planning the agenda topics resulting in a productive meeting. Dr. Koenings complimented Debby Hyde for her efforts as well.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Dr. Koenings adjourned the meeting at 4:33 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie Gow, Recording Secretary/President
Puget Sound Meeting Services