



RESTORING OUR
ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

July 14, 2006

*Report to the Executive Committee
Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project
Program Accomplishments and Milestones
February to June 2006*

Colonel Debra Lewis has deployed to Bagdad. The Change-of-Command Ceremony will be July 27, 2006 at 2:00 pm at the Chittenden Locks. Colonel Michael McCormick is Seattle District's next commander with LTC Leighow acting in the interim.



Director Koenings presents Colonel Lewis with a plaque commemorating her leadership of the Nearshore Partnership – February 2006

Valued Ecosystem Component (VECs) White Papers:

At the July 2005 Executive meeting, the Nearshore team reported on Valued Ecosystem Components (VECs) that the Partnership has identified. These VECs help translate the benefits of improving the health of the Puget Sound with social and economic values. We were challenged to describe human involvement in the ecosystem. Dr. Leschine, member of the Nearshore Science Team (NST) and Director of the UW School of Marine Affairs, with two graduate students accepted our task. They have written a partial draft of a tenth paper synthesizing categories of human values attributed to nature, which are described in social science literature.

The Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership's "Valued Ecosystem Components":

Salmon
Coastal Forests
Shellfish
Forage Fish
Marine Birds
Beaches & Bluffs
Great Blue Heron
Eelgrass & Kelp
Orcas

The folio of papers, with the “tenth VEC”, were written by individual experts, edited by Dr. Megan Dethier (UW researcher and NST member), reviewed by the NST and the authors’ peers, are nearing completion. The papers are scheduled to be ready by September and in time for the Restore America’s Estuaries (RAE) third annual conference in New Orleans to be held in December 2006. We expect that the VECs will help us translate ecological process restoration into more understandable ideas to explain the significance and importance of our recommended plan.

One Partner to Another: The Nearshore Partnership supports the Puget Sound Partnership as it works to address "Five Charges" from Governor Gregoire. In March 2006, the Nearshore Partnership provided a talking paper organized along the five charges that highlight relevant efforts to date, lessons learned, and our continuing commitment. It is intended to inform the Partnership leadership of what we are doing to improve the health of Puget Sound, and define our potential contributions to the larger initiative. Many of the Nearshore Partnership’s team members are serving on various roles with the Puget Sound Partnership. For instance, five of the Nearshore Science and Steering Committee members serve on the Puget Sound Partnership’s Science Sub-committee.

Team Retreat Summary:

The Nearshore Team Retreat was held at Fort Worden on June 6 and 7, and approximately 36 people attended. A brief summary of the main topics are:

Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program: The team developed a consensus recommendation to the Executive Committee on a project list. The criteria and evaluation process developed by the Implementation Team successfully withstood scrutiny and application by the Nearshore Partnership. Congratulations on successfully seeking projects, evaluating, and developing a workable recommendation! The Nearshore Science Team helped inform the team on relevant science issues relating to early actions. Their recommendations are be used now to improve the proposed projects and will be used in the future as we formulate or seek community projects.

Change Analysis: The Change Analysis Working Group of the Nearshore Science Team with CommEnSpace, Inc. presented their methodology and preliminary findings on the pilot investigation of WRIA9. The method developed is a culmination of many years of work and successfully ties many components of the General Investigation, including:

1. Digitizing historical evidence of the Puget Sound shoreline,
2. Using existing current-condition databases from many independent sources in new ways,
3. Characterizing the historic and current shoreline with a common typology based on fundamental natural processes, and
4. Comparing the past and current to describe significant nearshore changes in meaningful, convincing, and compelling terms.

The partnership agreed to pose questions to the Change Analysis team for additional analysis.

Next Year's (FY07) Work Plan: Discussions on assessing the Project Managers' work plan were postponed so that the management measures technical paper and future-without-project investigations could be discussed in the time remaining at the retreat. Instead, a handout of questions about the FY07 Work Plan was distributed for the team members to fill-out. The feedback will help us shape next year's efforts including strengthening working relationships and effectively utilizing our teams.

Management Measures (MM) Technical Papers: The Implementation Team presented the draft technical paper on armor modification, removal or replacement. They received many excellent comments to refine the draft and apply the format to other measures to develop a folio of technical papers for the investigation. The paper also could be useful as a communication tool for watershed managers conducting public workshops and other educational events, which is a new purpose identify at the retreat.

Future Without Project: A short summary of the future-without process was presented. The new team composed of science and steering committee members continues to meet with the University of Washington Center for Urban Ecology researchers to refine the approach culminating in the first of two workshops. After the first workshop, EPA funding is expected to continue to advance the scenario planning work. The team is posing questions to diverse groups of experts as a precursor to a workshop in August.

Project Managers' Perspective: The retreat was satisfying and successful. As a Partnership, we collectively acknowledged that the earlier efforts – once individual activities with little relationship to the other investigation activities – are beginning to come together. The Project Managers' were tasked, during the retreat's concluding remarks, with explicitly explaining how the "pieces" link, which will be a work product we develop to prepare for FY07.

Technical Document Publication

Under a contract with the Washington SeaGrant Program, the Nearshore Partnership is poised to publish two more technical documents:

- Puget Sound Beach Dynamics
- Nearshore Conceptual Model

Also, U.S. Geological Survey is publishing the "Coastal Habitats in Puget Sound: A Research Plan in Support of the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Program (PSNERP) – jointly written by the Nearshore Science and USGS Coastal Habitats Investigation teams – after a well-critiqued independent review by nationally recognized peers.

The typology report is the next technical paper we will be publishing.

These documents will be distributed via our Program website, www.pugetsoundnearshore.org.

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Potential Nearshore Projects List: Our Implementation Team, working with Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) staff, developed a database for managing a list of potential nearshore projects. IAC's PRISM database structure was adopted for future migration of the Nearshore Project database into a PRISM "nearshore module." Lead Entities, Marine Resource Committees, and tribes were contacted and they provided their lists of potential nearshore projects, generating over 500 entries in the database. The database served as the pool to select the first Estuary and Salmon Recovery Funded projects. We expect the list and purposes will grow while we develop the alternatives and recommended plan to complete the investigation.

