

**Strait of Juan de Fuca Action Area Workshop (Port Angeles)**  
July 17, 2008  
Workshop Summary

**Meeting Purpose**

The Puget Sound Partnership held a workshop in Port Angeles on July 17, 2008 to gather perspectives from stakeholders and add local knowledge and expertise to Partnership work. The meeting focused on reviewing the Partnership's regional priorities for the recovery of Puget Sound, discussing the newly-drafted action area profile and identifying local priorities.

**Meeting Overview**

Approximately 85 people attended the workshop at the Red Lion Hotel. Among those represented were local and tribal governments, local organizations, businesses, federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, and citizens.

**Meeting Summary**

Ray Outlaw, meeting facilitator, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. Ray led a round of introductions where each participant stated their name and organization. He recognized those affiliated with the Partnership in attendance: John Cambalik, Steve Tharinger, and David St. John.

Steve Tharinger, Straits Action Area Ecosystem Coordination Board representative, introduced himself and thanked the audience for their participation. He reminded participants that the meeting's goal was to identify how ecosystem needs for the Strait of Juan de Fuca Action Area fit into the Partnership's four initial priorities. He reminded the audience that this round of action area meetings is meant to provide an opportunity for public feedback to the Partnership on the draft priorities. He stressed the importance of an iterative process with ample opportunities for public engagement.

David St. John, King County staff and Puget Sound Partnership representative, introduced himself and gave a brief presentation about the Partnership. He underscored the importance of the Action Agenda as a living, adaptable roadmap for the protection and restoration of Puget Sound. He outlined the Partnership's role and presented a timeline of the Action Agenda development process, including: inventory work, action area meetings and topic forums. He summarized the day's agenda and asked for questions and comments from the audience.

The following is a list of questions and comments heard following the presentation. Answers are indicated with italics:

- Does the Partnership want specific suggestions about changes to the profiles? *Yes, but we will have time for discussing the profile in detail later.*

- A couple of months ago the Makah Tribe met with the Partnership. We have an extensive set of programs which I do not see listed on the Strait of Juan de Fuca Action Area programs list. *We would like to make sure these programs are captured. Let's discuss the matter over the break.*
- Does the Partnership reach out to the individuals who live in these communities? There are a lot of low income people who will be drastically impacted by suggested solutions that are expensive (e.g. septic tank repairs). *We are trying to understand the roles of humans in the ecosystem. We are aware of the costs and are working on funding strategies to support recommended solutions and trying to determine the best funding tools.*
- Have you thought of how you are going to start presenting the Action Agenda to the public, so people can understand it? *We will take advantage of the venues we have at the September action area meetings. Paul Bergman, our Communications Director, is working on developing effective messaging. The Partnership has created an online discussion forum and comment submission tool for people to provide feedback on the action area profiles.*
- A lot of people in more rural areas still have dial-up Internet connections, and many do not have computers. As well, all of the meetings are being held in the daytime, when many people do not have a chance to attend. I hope that in the next round the Partnership will allow for meetings where a common working person can attend.
- I would like to thank the Partnership for the outreach done to date and the quality of materials supplied. I think this process is leading toward a focus on measurable outcomes.

### **Session 1: Strategic priorities and action area profile**

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David St. John continued the presentation by outlining and briefly describing the Partnership's initial strategic priorities. He noted the priorities are based on the work of the topic forums and have been reviewed by the Leadership Council and Ecosystem Coordination Board.

The following is a list of questions and comments heard regarding the priorities following the presentation. Answers are indicated with italics:

- Is the Partnership going to deal with development pressures and growth in Puget Sound? *We recognize that growth is a huge issue that was pointed out by the topic forum papers. We will deal with this issue in ways that each priority will touch on, such as working within growth management approaches, using low impact development techniques, and minimizing or eliminating the use of certain toxic chemicals.*

- Is Priority A more of a priority than the others? Or are they unranked? *They are unranked. They are very much interrelated, and actions taken under Priority A will likely help other areas.*
- We feel that air quality is an important factor for consideration. It merits its own separate attention. *We have received this comment and will definitely consider how to include air quality.*
- The profile mentions toxics, nutrients and pathogens in fish and shellfish, but marine mammals are not discussed. Were marine mammals excluded or overlooked? *No, they were not intentionally excluded. This is something we will do our best to capture.*
- Here in the Straits and around Hood Canal, we have some important areas to protect. Water quality monitoring is an important metric. Should the priorities have a scientific component and address effective monitoring? *We will have a robust scientific monitoring plan within the adaptive management process.*
- Is the Partnership looking at a plan for the near term (biennium) or a long-term plan? *The Action Agenda will be a long-term strategy for Puget Sound, but it will include both short and long-term actions.*
- These priorities are excellent, well thought out and make sense. It might be useful to have a second set of priorities that emphasize people. The private sector should be considered – it will bring the solutions we need. The Partnership could develop a matrix for evaluating technologies in a systematic way, and should involve the idea of ecosystem processes. This initiative will fail if it is not economically based.
- With regard to Priority D and water pollution, everything economically has changed in the last year and energy is at the crux. People who live in the country are paying more for commuting, heating and food. These people cannot be the targets of expensive projects. We must look at public projects instead. We have some major infrastructure projects that can be looked at and point-source pollution is still an issue. One problem to be addressed is endocrine disruptors in wastewater. Perhaps we could look at developing tertiary treatment systems to deal with these pollutants.
- It is important to ensure that no region or economic sector bears the full costs of actions taken.
- It is important to understand where the science is coming from and how it is being used. There has been a lot said about using the best science available. Where available, is peer-reviewed, locally derived and applicable science being used, or is more general science being used? Ecosystems are unique and local knowledge should be taken into consideration.

John Cambalik, Regional Liaison, presented the Strait of Juan de Fuca Action Area Profile. He explained that in developing the profile, key information was culled from existing studies and locally reviewed. John asked participants to review the profile and provide high-level comments.

The following is a categorized list of questions and comments heard during the discussion. Answers are indicated with italics:

*Physical description comments:*

- Start by defining the area being described. People not familiar with this area will find it difficult to tell what the action area encompasses.
- Include harbors.
- Mention that we still have some excellent habitat that needs to be protected.
- Include more information about the importance of nearshore areas in the Straits.

*Land use, population, and economy comments:*

- Include the overall population and projections of population increases. Note land uses as percentages of total land. Pie graphs might be useful. Note impervious surface as a percentage of buildable land.
- Indicate sectors of the economy for each economic function.
- Include an indication of rate of urbanization.
- Mention horses for recreation as a contributor to runoff.
- Indicate that the Strait of Juan de Fuca Action Area is a tourism and recreation Mecca for the whole region. Describe our role as a tourist destination.
- Mention the rate of land conversion – from forestry and agriculture to other uses.
- It seems there is a commercial undertone in this profile. A lot of people are attracted to the quality of life and natural environment of this region. Can we find a way to use the natural resource richness of our action area to our advantage?
- Needs a statement about the overall acreage of this action area.
- Be consistent with regards to how percentages are written.
- We are a gateway to the rest of the world. The Olympic National Park is a key feature to include.
- The Strait of Juan de Fuca is our major marine highway. Quantify the nature of this traffic. The ports play a major role in water pollution.
- There is no mention of marine traffic or oil spills as a major threat to water quality.
- Our population increase comes primarily from people arriving from other watersheds. People are not informed about our watershed. We need constant education since people are unfamiliar with the area.

*Unique ecosystem characteristics and assets comments:*

- People are not mentioned here. Highlight the rural character of the area.
- Can you clarify the sentence, “Regional hydrology is sustained in part by the high portion of timberland in the Strait Action Area”? *This refers to natural conditions maintaining natural hydrology better than developed conditions.* It should be restated that way.

- Global warming is key. A lot of our water is derived from the mountains and glacial inputs, and should be mentioned under hydrology. Eastern portions of the Straits Action Area are critical aquifer recharge areas.
- Note Miller Peninsula State Park. *It is included on the map.*
- Include the large natural harbor at Port Angeles.
- The Summer Chum evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) extends into the Straits Action Area. Also steelhead should be mentioned in addition to Chinook.
- An important component of the nearshore ecosystem is eelgrass. It is listed in linear feet, which is not a useful metric. Mention that eelgrass is decreasing in range.
- Both Jefferson and Clallam County share small, sustainable agricultural lands. This is an important piece in terms of resources and land use. This is a benefit as it provides local food markets. It should be included.
- There is nothing mentioning the mountain ecosystem apart from the piece on Olympic National Park.
- The text does not emphasize Olympic National Park's important role in the water supply, especially for the City of Port Angeles.
- Under water quality programs, septic systems are discussed. From my experience, septic systems, even when they are well maintained and inspected, contribute to nitrate and phosphate levels in the water. There needs to be more filtration before water goes back into the system.
- Air quality is not mentioned. The Straits is a Class 1 airshed. Cargo and vessel traffic affect the area and should be a concern for the habitat.

*Ecosystem stressors comments:*

- The lack of a wastewater treatment facility in Victoria is not mentioned.
- The next to last section mentions altered shorelines. Mention human land use within the larger watershed in addition to just shorelines.
- We have lost lowland fish and wildlife habitat. Add the word "lowland."
- The Elwha River is inextricably linked to the two dams that will be removed. Highlight actions being taken. Also, separate stressors from actions. *It would be useful to separate out the statements that are not stressors.*
- The items listed in the profile are not necessarily stressors – in some cases they are results of stressors. It would be good to separate out stressors from their effects. Reference NOAA's assessment of acidification of oceans and water bodies as a result of climate change.
- List sewage overflows at the wastewater treatment plants, pesticide runoff and use of biosolids.
- Include anticipated stressors as a result of economic problems, for example increased use of wood for heating and larger home gardens using fertilizers.
- The term "regulatory challenges" is important. There is a huge, complex regulatory system that does not work consistently. Mention this as a stressor.
- Mention invasive plant species.

- Mention population growth.
- The Dungeness River is not the only river that has experienced channel modification. Information on relative impacts of channel modification and water diversion would be helpful.
- It seems like Port Townsend as a city is not included in this action area. *Port Townsend is included, but Port Townsend Bay is not.*
- Other communities like Sekiu are not mentioned and should be included.
- Address how Olympic National Park protects the action area from many different stressors.
- Another potential stressor is large, catastrophic fires, which could affect the environment.
- Mention outside stressors. Although the Straits is geographically isolated, outside influences such as climate change and mercury play an important role.
- Mention air pollution from the Port Townsend paper mill.

*Water quality comments:*

- Coarse and fine sediment are shown on the map but not listed in the profile.
- What about pharmaceuticals in drinking water?
- Cruise ships are increasing in our waters and there are no major water quality regulations.
- Emphasize the importance of urban sewage outfalls as an overall contributor to water quality problems.
- Add high water temperatures and low dissolved oxygen levels.
- Pharmaceuticals are going to be a real concern. How do we get rid of pills being dumped?
- The concern is less about the pills that have not been taken, but is more about the pills that have been ingested. Pharmaceutical estrogens are affecting fish reproduction. We need tertiary treatment and aquifer storage and recovery to treat water further and provide additional fire protection in rural areas.
- Add acidification to the list.
- Biosolids were mentioned earlier. The concern here is sewage sludge.
- Canary grass and other invasive species impact dissolved oxygen and should be on the radar.

*Water quantity comments:*

- Address unused “inchoate water rights” for municipalities.
- In many places, such as Seattle, water is discharged at deep outflows. For water conservation consider water reuse instead.
- What about rainwater storage? Rainwater harvesting and rain barrels are illegal according to state law.
- Consider flow for farms as well as fish, to promote local agriculture.
- Train farmers in more efficient of irrigation practices.

*Human population pressure comments:*

- Add figures about the projected future population at build-out.
- Zoning policy issues create population pressure.
- Although the Straits action area is a large piece of land, the “developable” land is a small percentage of the total. State the percentage of “developable” versus “non-developable” land.
- Consider seasonal population influxes due to Olympic National Park. Also mention risks unique to the area including earthquakes and tsunamis.
- You mentioned that comments are being accepted on the Web. What is going to happen with these comments? Will they end up being redundant? *They will be considered as additional comments.*

**Session 2: Aligning local and regional priorities**

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Ray led a discussion about each of the Partnership’s priorities by asking the following questions:

1. What are you currently doing in support of this priority?
2. What are the top priorities?
3. What are the local barriers to achieving the priority?
4. What else can you do to help the Partnership achieve this priority? How can the Partnership help you achieve this priority in your action area?

**Priority D: *Prevent the sources of water pollution***

- There should be more hazardous material collection and source control. We need to look at pet waste and household materials including pharmaceuticals.
- We need more monitoring for new sources of contamination. A barrier to this is funding.
- The Partnership should use local citizens as a resource. For example, the Washington State University Streamkeepers and Beach Watchers programs provide training, knowledge and monitoring.
- People should be aware of aging infrastructure, such as bridges and highways, which might impede response to disasters like forest fires.
- Surface runoff from agriculture is an important source of pollution.
- Locals should be invited to participate in the state political process regarding budgeting priorities.
- The Partnership should strengthen local educational organizations. For example the Marine Science Center at Fort Worden is increasing community awareness of plastics and their impacts on the environment.
- It is important to prepare in advance for potential oil spills. A rescue tug at Neah Bay is now being supported full-time. This sort of preventative measure is critical.
- There needs to be more education for homeowners on how to maintain their septic tanks. We also need funding for monitoring of septic tanks.

- We need to showcase demonstration bioremediation projects. Existing bioremediation regulations are a barrier to improving water quality.
- Low impact development is not being implemented because incentives are lacking. Codes and incentives for low impact development need to be adopted.
- We need to educate people starting at an early age and train local people to do the work, rather than bringing people in from outside our area to reduce costs.
- Jefferson County has undergone recent wastewater treatment facility upgrades and is implementing key best management practices.
- Sources of water pollution are hard to define. I recommend that source studies not just look at *E. coli*, but at other pathogens. The technology exists to do this.
- There are myriad of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working around the Sound that are not tapped. I suggest that in the seven action areas around the Sound, you have a list of the different NGOs. I would really like to see the Partnership reach out to experienced local groups and acknowledge and fund citizen work.

**Priority C: *Reestablish the ecosystem processes that sustain Puget Sound***

- One barrier is funding. I suggest a transfer of wealth from urban areas to rural areas that have habitat to protect.
- We have been working with a group called the “Chumsortium” which includes several local partners. We have been helping support and coordinate these partners’ efforts through restoration in the Snow and Salmon Creek drainages, and through land protection and acquisition. We need a dependable source of income. Also, even though a lot of the things we are doing are “salmon-centric”, they have a broad impact.
- I echo the need for funding. Cities and counties are required to update their shoreline master programs and develop restoration plans. These restoration plans are unfunded mandates. People are nervous about the potential for increased competition for existing funds. Technical and regulatory assistance from the Partnership and strategies about how to better integrate existing efforts and statutes / regulations that drive them would be helpful.
- We need to tacitly acknowledge the ecosystem services that this region provides. Since our area does not have to spend money on retrofits, maybe we can get some money from the Partnership for protecting our intact resources.
- The term “ecosystem processes” needs to be defined. We need to understand the monetary value that comes from this region in sustaining Puget Sound. *The Puget Sound Partnership is currently working on an ecosystem services analysis. Information on this study will be posted on the Web in the near term. An ecosystem services analysis includes developing a value for services the ecosystem provides, (e.g., carbon sequestration). The World Resources Institute’s Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (available on the Web) provides a useful overview.*

- Outreach and education should be an ongoing priority of the Partnership. Buzzwords like “ecosystem processes” are confusing to the general public. There is a strong need for local organizations to get involved in the education process.
- It is important to consider who the ultimate client is going to be. I think the client is the general public, and these people must be on board. It is difficult for a public agency to engage in this process, but if the voting public is not involved this process will not succeed. The materials developed will need to be very good. I would like to give the Partnership kudos for the “Shifting Baselines” video available on their Web site. *We need more of the same. Good point. We need to do this continuously and reach newcomers.*
- Education and outreach are essential. If the public gets the full story, they will support the necessary measures regardless of cost.
- The Partnership could be a clearinghouse for training and workshops.
- The Partnership could help develop curriculum to be used in primary and secondary schools as well as colleges and universities. Student involvement will help ensure future public awareness and willingness to fund priority actions.
- Our job is to figure out ways to get peoples’ attention.
- There are twenty or thirty empty seats here. Why not invite people from the farmers’ market, the grange and other groups. *To their credit, the newspaper did a good job of publicizing this meeting.*
- Work with the State Office of Public Instruction to involve the educational system more directly.
- Granges are represented here. Most people involved in agriculture cannot be here this afternoon.
- The three “E’s” (education, economy and environment) provide a good framework.
- The Straits Action Area is unique. I am interested in how the priorities will be applied to our area. For example, only 13 percent of our coastline has already been developed. I think our area’s status deserves careful consideration. *Good point. We have both shifting baselines and multiple baselines.*
- I recommend moving forward on low impact development and building more expertise and demand for these practices in our area. I also recommend technical support for emerging technologies.
- A list of ecosystem processes would be helpful.
- Managed forests provide all three “E’s” in ecosystem management. The timber industry is often overlooked and under-acknowledged. There has been a lot of effort in developing regulations. This industry has evolved. These lands also support the ecosystem by remaining undeveloped.
- The Partnership should be aware of the three “E’s.” *The Partnership’s education and outreach coordinator has been working closely in this process.*

**Priority B: *Protect the intact ecosystem processes that sustain Puget Sound***

- Critical Area Ordinances (CAOs) have been mandated but often are not developed. The same is true for low impact development measures. Inconsistent regulations do not allow for better land use and reduction of impervious surfaces. *What would you recommend?* Grants or other funds could be withheld from jurisdictions lagging behind in developing CAOs. Needs should be prioritized and external costs addressed.
- Funding is a major institutional barrier to implementing CAOs and other environmental requirements.
- Septic systems return water to the groundwater and help filter water. I will develop a matrix and share it with the Partnership.
- The nearshore ecosystem is still intact in many parts of our region and shoreline development has not yet occurred. Protecting intact nearshore habitat should be a priority.
- There is no reward for using environmentally friendly building technologies. Building permits are issued regardless. The City of Sequim is an example of poor growth management. The state turns responsibility over to local entities who often do not consider environmental impacts.
- “Highest and best use” is a guiding theme for the economic use of land. Ecosystem values are not considered in this equation, but should be.
- I hope that protection would come before restoration. Protection offers more “bang for the buck.”
- Working forest is a large portion of our land. The Forest Practices Act and other legislation lay out multiple requirements for these landowners. Working forest lands are an important accomplishment and represent ongoing work.
- We are making good progress on removal of fish passage barriers. A major barrier is funding. We have done a lot of work, but there is a significant amount left to do and what we lack is funding.
- Port Townsend’s water comes from another watershed – the Quilcene. There should be a requirement that resources are returned to the watershed they were taken from, or to another watershed to mitigate. We also need to look at rural and urban areas separately. Cost is a barrier.
- If density is being increased without setting aside open spaces there is no net gain.

***Priority A: Ensure that activities and funding are focused on the most urgent and important problems facing the Sound (That is: Work more effectively and efficiently on priorities)***

Prior to the discussion, David St. John told participants about Partnership efforts to improve system effectiveness, including a group called “Mitigation That Works” that is providing recommendations about how to improve the mitigation system. He also mentioned an enforcement scoping meeting held by the Partnership to discuss enforcement and the top priorities that arose, including education and permit alignment.

- A number of comments have mentioned data and baselines. Data is critical to focusing on the most urgent and important problems in an effective way. It would

be valuable to develop a quality of life baseline measure that could be tracked. The Sightline Institute in Seattle has done some work in this area and I would suggest the Partnership make contact with this group if they have not done so already. Modeling will also be critical to a successful process, especially for ecosystem processes, ecosystem disturbances and proposed ecosystem management measures. If the Partnership's models predict successful management interventions, these can be marketed. These elements are all interconnected and integral to the Partnership's success. *The Partnership has been working on developing quality of life indicators. We have also been working closely with NOAA to develop modeling measures that will do what you describe. This process will take several months.*

- The existing water law structure in this state is a system-wide problem. Many things that seem logical can not be implemented because water laws get in the way.
- It will be important to look at historical records and interview people to determine how things arrived at their current state of being. It will be difficult to get enough data to describe the current status of the ecosystem.
- The Partnership needs a unified dataset approach to avoid data fragmentation. I recommend taking a three-track approach to setting initial strategic priorities – one for a healthy economy, one for a challenged economy and one for a collapsed economy. This would better prioritize spending of potential funds. *This sounds like an alternative futures approach to the economy.*
- I recommend that not all funding be allocated to Priority A – it needs to be spread across the priorities.
- Demonstration projects for bioremediation, water reuse and reclamation are a personal priority. Who in the Partnership would be the proper contact to discuss potential demonstration projects? *Unfortunately we do not have an answer to this yet.*
- I work for Streamkeepers. We have been looking for direction on priorities for a long time. We have a large cadre of volunteers who would love to work for a unified, Sound-wide effort. Technical support for local entities will be needed. For example, we have groups around the region collecting biological monitoring data using a standard protocol from the University of Washington. We need advice on whether to use these old protocols or adopt new ones. There is also a lot of data that is difficult to consolidate, but this needs to be done and can be done.
- I hope the Partnership will focus not only on fixing urgent problems, but also on addressing chronic and systemic problems.
- I am concerned that what we really need to be doing is looking at behavior change, values and consumer choices. I do not know what the answer is, but I think our communities should work with the Partnership to reinforce positive values.
- I work for a local land trust, and our biggest barrier is funding. I would suggest setting some funds aside and allowing the community to vote on how funds are used.

- I volunteer for Streamkeepers. We hope the data we gathered gets used. The Partnership should use citizen activism to its advantage through good coordination and support.
- The Port Angeles Business Association is interested in this process. We know this will take a lot of effort and money. Adequately defining what would constitute a successful effort and how it would be measured is important to the business community.
- Urban forestry can help mitigate impacts to the environment.
- The Dungeness River Center has a school outreach program that addresses local issues.
- Although wastewater treatment plants are sometimes characterized as polluters, they are part of the solution. I am concerned that the Growth Management Act forces counties to adopt centralized systems and does not provide for other options. These systems are expensive.
- I work for the Makah Tribe. I urge the Partnership to focus on the Straits as well as the Sound, since it is the “beginning of the road.” We have a water quantity issue and have developed a resource recovery facility for rainwater catchment and solar power. We also have biofiltration ponds for stormwater. We are trying to develop a community use-based facility.
- The Governor gave a clear charge to the Partnership to focus on the interface between a healthy ecosystem and human health.
- I run Congressman Norm Dicks’ office in Port Angeles. Congressman Dicks supports this work and it helps us when you let us know what the local priorities are.

### **Wrap Up and Next Steps**

David St. John thanked participants and reminded them that the Partnership will consider input from this series of meetings. He also noted that there will be another series of meetings in September where more complete information on actions recommended in the Action Agenda will be made available for comment. He also mentioned that the Partnership is currently involved in a SEPA process, led by Chris Townsend. The Leadership Council will discuss the SEPA process at their October meeting, and the process will include a public comment period.

Steve Tharinger acknowledged the complexity and long-term nature of the problem and the importance of public participation in the process. He stressed continued involvement and engagement of the audience as participants in the Action Agenda process, and as political constituents, consumers and cost sharers.