

Appendix C:

Puget Sound National Estuary Program Management Conference Overview

This appendix provides a description of the Management Conference of the Puget Sound National Estuary Program, including:

- I. Management Conference Roles and Structure
- II. Puget Sound Partnership Agency Role and Structure
- III. Management Conference Decision Making Process
- IV. Summary of Puget Sound Management Conference History

I. Management Conference Roles and Structure

Unlike other National Estuary Program (NEP) organizations, the Partnership is also a state agency. State statute defines composition and roles for key structural elements of the Puget Sound Partnership (RCW 90.71), including the Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, Science Panel, and Executive Director. The Partnership also serves as the state's designated lead agency for Puget Sound salmon recovery under RCW 70.85.090.

As created, the Partnership is intended to be a multi-disciplinary, networked regional coalition. To fulfill this role, structures have evolved to provide specific coordination, advice, implementation and collaboration. Some elements, like the Education, Communication and Outreach Network (ECO-Net) and Local Integrating Organizations were created by the Partnership. Others coalitions and groups existed prior to the Partnership or have been developed by partners engaged in Puget Sound recovery. These include but are not limited to the Puget Sound Institute, Puget Sound caucuses (federal, state, environmental, tribes), formal and informal interest groups, watershed groups, local government coalitions, and trans-boundary (US/Canada) work groups. The salmon recovery program includes the Salmon Recovery Council and its affiliated Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT), and watershed Lead Entities.

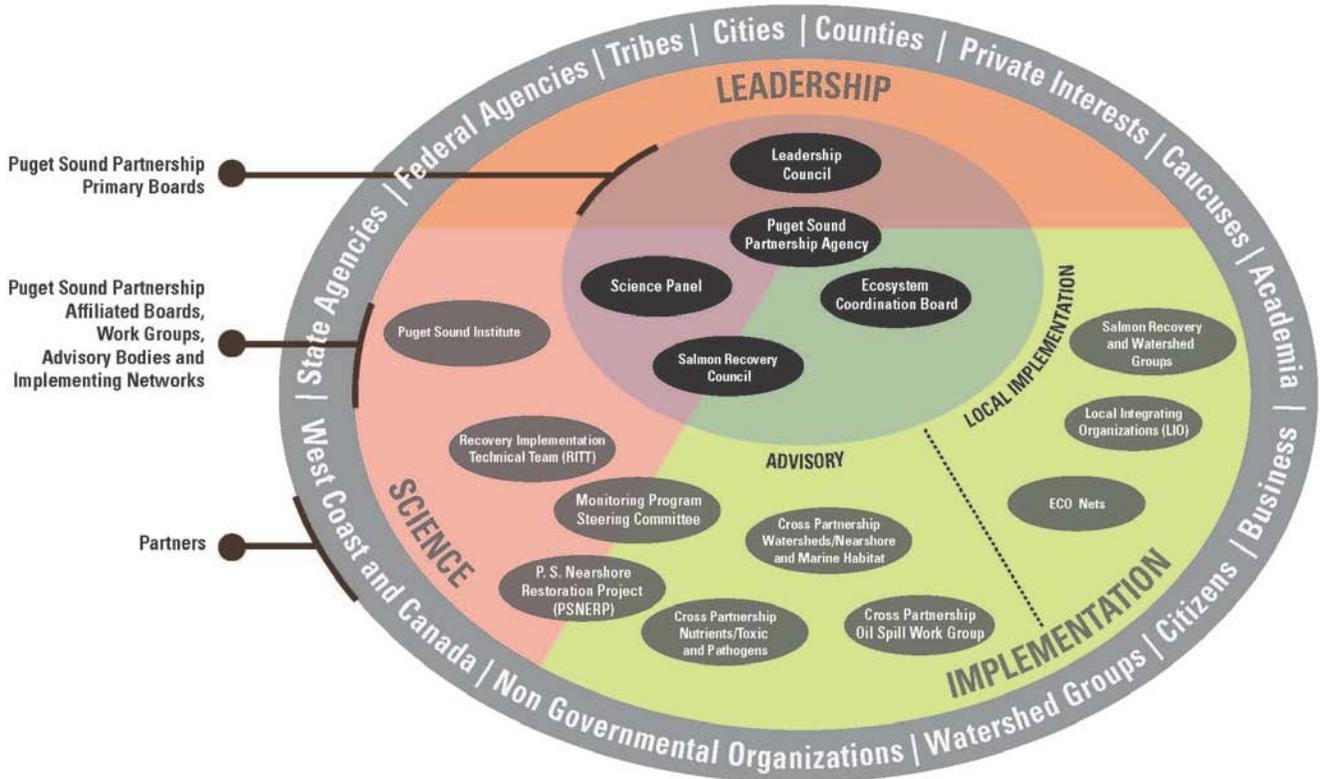
The Management Conference relationship is shown in Figure A.1

Under the National Estuary Program (NEP), a “Management Conference” is needed to help guide and direct the overall program of respective NEP organizations. By federal statute, the Management Conference includes the program administrator and representatives of state and nations, regional agencies, appropriate federal agencies, local governments, affected industries, educational institutions, and the public (CWA 320(c)).

For the purposes of the National Estuary Program as identified by EPA Region X, the Puget Sound Management Conference includes the Partnership as described in statute with the Puget Sound Partnership state agency, Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, and Science Panel; and the broader partnership that includes the caucuses related to the Ecosystem Coordination Board, Salmon Recovery Council, formal and informal interest groups, watershed groups, individual local governments, and Canada.

Puget Sound Partnership Management Conference

Conceptual diagram of organization and partner structure



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Partnership Structure as Defined by Statute

Partnership State Agency: An Executive Director with staff administers the Partnership. The Director acts as a critical link between the Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, and Science Panel. The Director also communicates directly with other interests such as governments, the private sector, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and citizens not specifically represented on the advisory boards. The Executive Director has supervisory responsibility for Partnership staff, is appointed by the Governor in consultation with the Leadership Council and serves in the Governor’s cabinet. The Leadership Council may delegate functions to the Executive Director with the exception of developing or amending the Action Agenda. For additional detail on Partnership staff functions, see “Partnership Agency Structure” section below.

Leadership Council: This seven-member council sets policy and strategic direction for the Partnership. This includes adopting, revising, and guiding implementation of the Action Agenda, allocating funds for recovery efforts, providing progress and other reports, setting and implementing the accountability system, and promoting extensive public awareness, education, and participation in protection and

recovery efforts. The Leadership Council serves as the regional salmon recovery organization for Puget Sound salmon species (except for Hood Canal summer chum). Members have staggered terms and are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the state Senate. Decisions are made by consensus. The Council has bylaws that guide its operations.

The Partnership statute identifies specific reporting and accountability responsibilities for the Leadership Council (RCW 90.71.350 and 370). These include:

- Achieving the Action Agenda. This includes developing standards and processes to determine whether implementing agencies are taking actions consistent with the Action Agenda and achieving the outcomes identified.
- Determining substantial non-compliance with the Action Agenda.
- Providing a forum for addressing and resolving problems, conflicts, or a substantial lack of progress in a specific area of implementation, or addressing issues that citizens or implementing entities bring to the Council.
- Making recommendations to the Legislature, Governor, implementing agency, local government or other appropriate entity for addressing and resolving conflicts, impediments, or deficiencies related to statutes, rules, ordinances, or policies.
- Making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for local or state administrative or legislative actions to address Action Agenda implementation barriers.
- By September 1 of each even-numbered year beginning in 2008, providing recommendations for funding necessary to implement the Action Agenda in the succeeding biennium to the Governor and Legislature. The 2008 report shall include recommendations for project funding needed through 2020 to implement the Action Agenda.
- By November 1 of each odd-numbered year beginning in 2009, producing a *State of the Sound* report. [Note that the Partnership has shifted the report to even numbered years so that the *State of the Sound* conclusions inform the Action Agenda and Biennial Science Work Plan updates.]
- Reviewing state programs that fund facilities and activities that may contribute to Action Agenda implementation.

Ecosystem Coordination Board: This 27-member board advises and assists the Leadership Council. Their statutory duties (RCW.90.71.250) include assisting and advising the Leadership Council in preparing and implementing the Action Agenda, working with implementers to identify actions needed, seeking funding and the commitment of other resources for plan implementation, conducting public outreach and local implementation strategies, and actively encouraging collaboration and communication among public, private, non-governmental interests, and citizens.

The Board is focused on problem solving and the practical aspects of implementation, as well as assisting the Leadership Council in identifying areas of work that need emphasis. Serving as a broadly representative group of implementers, the Board provides critical advice to the Leadership Council and Executive Director on major strategic and implementation decisions. This includes considering and commenting on budgets, work plans, and future changes to the Partnership's strategic direction that arise from adaptive management. The Board can also discuss issues of concern to its members and their constituents, and make subsequent recommendations to the Partnership staff and Leadership Council for action. The Board has bylaws that provide operating guidance.

The Board is comprised of representatives of key implementing agencies or organizations, and by statute includes one representative from each of the seven geographic action areas (solicited from the action areas), two business representatives (appointed by the Leadership Council), two environmental representatives (appointed by the Leadership Council), three representatives of tribal governments in Puget Sound (invited by the Governor), one representative each for counties, cities, and port districts (appointed by the Leadership Council), three representatives of state agencies with environmental management responsibilities (one of whom is the Commissioner of Public Lands), three representatives of federal agencies with environmental responsibilities (invited by the Governor), and four legislative liaisons (two appointed by the President of the State Senate, two appointed by the Speaker of the State House of Representatives). Board members represent key interests and are expected to get input from and relay information to their broader constituencies. The strength of the Ecosystem Coordination Board lies in its diversity. Differing opinions are respected and the Board can advise without having consensus. In providing input to the Leadership Council, the Board often represents the range of opinions represented by members.

Science Panel: A nine-member Science Panel was established in statute (RCW 90.71.280) provides independent, scientific advice to the Leadership Council. By statute, the panel is to be comprised of diverse disciplines ranging from biological and physical disciplines to social science and engineering. The Science Panel has added two additional members to add diversity and more fully represent social science disciplines. The Panel assists the Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, and Executive Director in carrying out the obligations of the Partnership. This includes assisting the Partnership in developing an ecosystem-level strategic science program with indicators for ecosystem health and input on policy-based benchmarks; monitoring, modeling, data management, and research; recommending research priorities to fill knowledge gaps; developing and overseeing a competitive, peer-reviewed process for soliciting, strategically prioritizing, and funding research and modeling projects; providing input to the Executive Director in developing biennial implementation strategies; offering an ecosystem perspective on scientific work conducted in Puget Sound; and engaging regional scientific talent in Puget Sound recovery. The Panel has bylaws that guide its operations.

The Panel is specifically responsible for developing a regional monitoring program; developing a list of critical research needs; and preparing a Strategic Science Plan, Biennial Science Work Plan, and Puget Sound Science Update. The Panel also assists in preparing and updating the Action Agenda, as well as the *State of the Sound* report.

The Panel provides scientific advice to the Puget Sound Institute, a cooperative program between the Center for Urban Waters and the University of Washington Tacoma. The Puget Sound Institute's role in the management conference is to provide the capacity for rigorous, transparent analysis, synthesis, discussion and dissemination of science in support of the restoration and protection of the Puget Sound ecosystem. The Puget Sound Institute also holds a non-voting position as a member of the Science Panel.

The Leadership Council makes staggered term appointments to the Science Panel. Appointments are based on nominations, and are vetted by the Washington Academy of Sciences.

While not formally identified in statute, the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council was developed as part of the regional process to implement the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan. The Recovery Council was developed through the process led by the former Shared Strategy for Puget Sound to coordinate the development of the Plan across the region. When the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound sunset at the

end of 2007, the Puget Sound Partnership assumed the responsibility of supporting the regional organizational structure needed to recover salmon. As part of this effort, the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council assists the Leadership Council in carrying out its salmon recovery responsibilities (RCW 70.85.090) by advising the Leadership Council on decisions relating to salmon recovery and the implementation of the Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan. Specific responsibilities include: advising the Leadership Council on setting policy direction for implementation, including allocation of resources for habitat restoration and protection; developing and directing strategic approaches to near-term issues and actions, including adaptive management and monitoring; and holding others, and being held, accountable for implementation of the recovery plan. This role encompasses the habitat, harvest, and hatchery aspects of salmon recovery.

The 32 members of the Salmon Recovery Council include representatives of each of the 14 chapter areas (chosen by the groups themselves), state and federal agencies engaged in salmon recovery in the Puget Sound, tribes, and business and environmental interests. Whenever possible, the Salmon Recovery Council makes decisions through a consensus process, but will vote if necessary on time-sensitive issues or if consensus cannot be reached.

The Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT) is the regional technical team that supports implementation of the salmon recovery plan. The RITT advises the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council on technical issues. Work includes original design and analyses, independent review, literature review, and scientific interpretation of other studies. The Puget Sound Watershed Leads is a staff level regional group that helps develop and review actions for the Recovery Council. The Watershed Leads group consists of members of each of the fourteen watershed chapter areas, the fifteen lead entities in the Puget Sound, as well as supporting state agency staff.

Partnership Standing sub-committees

As of July 2011, the Partnership has the following standing sub-committees and advisory groups. Members are drawn from the Partnership agency and leadership bodies above, as well as key partners with subject expertise and interest.

- **Monitoring Steering Committee:** Coordinates and develops an ecosystem monitoring program to evaluate progress towards ecosystem recovery and to improve the scientific basis for management actions.
- **Cross Partnership Oil Spill Work Group:** Provides independent advice and assessment of Washington State's oil spill programs and recommends necessary improvements.
- **Cross Partnership Strategic Advisory Groups:** Provide strategic advice on the Action Agenda update process, target setting and biennial science work plan; and on the EPA Lead Organization six-year strategies for a) protecting and restoring watersheds; b) nearshore and marine habitat; and c) prevent, reduce and control nutrients, toxic and pathogen loadings to Puget Sound.
- **Social Science / Social Strategies Advisory Committee:** Advises the Science Panel and staff on the application of the social sciences to advance Puget Sound recovery.

Local Implementation in Action Areas: The Partnership's authorizing statute (RCW 90.71.260) created seven action areas to help organize the work of protecting and restoring Puget Sound at the local level. While the action area concept is useful for sharing information and working to implement the Action Agenda and priority local actions, the Partnership has taken the concept a step further. The Partnership is working to help form Local Integrating Organizations (LIOs) at a scale that makes the most sense for

Action Agenda implementation. In some areas, the LIO is at the action area level (e.g. Hood Canal, Strait of Juan de Fuca, South Central, and South Sound) to become a LIO. In other areas (e.g. Whatcom and San Juan) a different geography was determined to be more useful. The Partnership is continuing to work with those areas where local communities are still deciding the right LIO geography and structure.

The purpose of the LIO is to identify locally relevant strategies and actions to implement the Action Agenda and accomplish the sound-wide objectives. LIOs are a coordinating body and each has different membership. Example members include salmon recovery watershed groups, marine resource committees, tribes, local governments, local utilities, farming interests, environmental interests and others. Composition of each group is included in their profile in the Action Agenda.

As of December 2011, those areas that have formed LIOs are:

- Strait of Juan de Fuca: Strait Ecosystem Recovery Network
- Hood Canal: Hood Canal Coordinating Council
- South Sound: Alliance for a Healthy South Sound
- South Central: South Central Puget Sound Caucus Group
- Island: Island County/Watershed LIO
- Whatcom: Consolidated WRIA 1 Joint Policy Boards
- San Juan Islands: San Juan Action Agenda Oversight Group

Those areas that are still in formation are:

- North Central/Kitsap County
- Skagit Watershed/Skagit County
- Stillaguamish and Snohomish Watersheds/Snohomish and King Counties

Ecosystem and Salmon Recovery. The Ecosystem & Salmon Recovery team works to implement the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan and the Action Agenda in local communities. The team works with salmon recovery watershed groups, tribes, state agencies, federal agencies, local governments and non-profits around Puget Sound. See Action Agenda Section A.9 for more specific information on the responsibilities of this program. The team has also led the development of the Local Implementing Organizations.

Working groups and coalitions that support the statutory structure

The diversity of groups interested in Puget Sound ecosystem protection and recovery include governments, tribes, business, ports, natural resource industries such as farming, forestry and fisheries, environmental, utilities, human health, tourism and recreation, and many others. The Puget Sound Partnership was created to engage public and private interests, both Soundwide and in local communities, in the long-term protection and recovery of the ecosystem. This includes coordinating activities, sharing expertise, facilitating recovery work, leveraging partnerships and resources, and enhancing the ongoing efforts in Puget Sound. Members of the Management Conference meet with partners collectively and individually. In addition to the issue specific partnerships and collaborations mentioned in Sections A-D of the Action Agenda, the following list are important elements of the overall Management Conference.

Puget Sound Tribes: The health of the Puget Sound is intrinsically linked to the physical and cultural health of Western Washington Tribes, as well as to tribal sovereignty. Indian tribes rely on the Puget Sound's natural resources for economic and subsistence purposes. Most of the Puget Sound tribes hold treaty-reserved rights to fish, hunt, and gather roots and berries throughout the Puget Sound Basin.

The Puget Sound Partnership is committed to acting consistently with tribal treaty rights, the federal trust responsibility to Indian tribes and tribal interests in planning and implementing the Action Agenda. The Partnership recognizes the Centennial Accord and is committed to the principles contained in it. The Partnership also recognizes the sovereign status of Federally Recognized Tribes and their unique government-to-government relationship with all federal agencies. While the Governor has appointed a Tribal leader to the Leadership Council and the Partnership includes tribal input on the Ecosystem Coordination Board and seeks additional input from the Tribal caucus, the Partnership understands that direct government-to-government communication with individual tribes is also necessary. The Partnership will recognize and foster the co-management relationship that is established between the tribes and state agencies. The Partnership expects its federal and state partners will also carry out their tribal trust responsibilities by working cooperatively with tribal governments to preserve and enhance our environment and to ensure that tribal treaty rights are upheld.

Since 2008, The Partnership and Tribes developed a set of protocols that created the Partnership Tribal Co-Management Council (PTCC). The purpose of PTCC is to provide an official forum for the early and frequent involvement of tribes in Partnership activities including policy and project development and prioritization. PTCC does not replace the need for federal and state agencies, including the Partnership, from establishing direct government-to-government relationships with each Puget Sound tribe.

Examples of ongoing collaboration with Puget Sound Tribes

- The Partnership convenes PTCC meetings consistent with the agreed upon protocols in order to develop common funding, policy and projects to collaborate on over the course of the biennium.
- The Partnership has a need and an obligation to consult with each tribe on an individual basis. This must be done at the executive director level even though daily relationships are nurtured and sustained with tribal staff through our ecosystem recovery program. The Partnership shall invite each Puget Sound tribe to consult on issues related to Puget Sound recovery and of mutual concern at least once per biennium. The Partnership works with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission on this collaborative need.
- The U.S. EPA and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission support the Coast Salish Gathering in order to encourage collaborative relationships between all levels of government on both sides of the US/Canadian border. The Coast Salish gathering has emerged as an important forum for building collaborative relationships across the entire Salish Sea and should be stated as a strategy to nurture the success of that effort.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency fund Tribes with Puget Sound Geographic Program funds to participate in the implementation of priority actions in the Action Agenda and to participate in Action Agenda review and update processes. (EPA)

Federal Agencies: The federal caucus promotes information sharing, development of joint work priorities, and collaboration among federal agency leadership and staff. Thirteen federal agencies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to commit to these working principles, and all federal agencies

with Puget Sound interests are welcome to participate. Agencies include those with environmental and natural resource responsibilities such as NOAA, the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as those with local defense and security responsibilities such as the Coast Guard, Army, and Navy. The federal caucus has a work plan to guide their engagement with Puget Sound recovery efforts.

Examples of ongoing collaboration:

- Regular meetings of the federal caucus
- Maintaining a joint federal work plan that support implementation of priority recovery strategies and actions, including science and reporting. Use the Action Agenda to help set work plan priorities.
- Increasing internal federal coordination and communication to efficiently implement Action Agenda priorities. Examples include: coordinating restoration and protection grants and other funding; improving government-to-government consultation with Puget Sound tribes on federal agency actions; and coordinating restoration-related permits.
- Aligning federal agency budgets with priorities of the Action Agenda as described in Priorities A, B, C, and D.
- Modeling stewardship behavior consistent with the priorities in sections A, B, and C of the Action Agenda

State agencies: State agencies with natural resource and human health responsibilities meet promote increased efficiency through consistent coordination, communication and program alignment via the State Caucus and Natural Resource cabinet. Participating agencies in the state caucus include, but are not limited to the departments of Ecology, Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife, Commerce, Transportation and Health, State Conservation Commission, Recreation and Conservation Office, the Governor’s Office, and the Office of Financial Management.

Local Governments: Much of the effort to protect and restore Puget Sound is and will continue to occur locally. Cities and counties are in many cases the frontline for addressing impacts—they develop and implement growth management plans and development regulations, manage surface water runoff, treat wastewater, and provide numerous benefits to citizens. Working cooperatively with cities and counties is essential for federal and state agencies, tribes, and non-governmental interests. In addition to participating as individual jurisdictions and in LIOs, counties work together through the Washington State Association of Counties and County Coastal Caucus and cities work together through the Association of Washington Cities.

Interest-based organizations and collaborations: There are numerous interest-based organizations at the Soundwide and local level. Many interest groups participate via existing associations and organizations, such as the Washington Forest Protection Association, diverse agricultural associations, boating interests, property rights interests, business and commercial interests, and many others.

Interest-based caucuses include:

- Environmental caucus. This caucus primarily includes groups with Soundwide environmental interests such as People for Puget Sound, Washington Environmental Council, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, American Rivers, and many others.

- **Business caucus.** Recovery and long-term protection of the Puget Sound ecosystem will only happen with expertise, contributions and business acumen of the private sector. Job creation, economic growth and stability and ecosystem markets are mutual interests of the partnership and the business community. The business caucus works primarily through the Association of Washington Business and is organized by the representatives on the Ecosystem Coordination Board.

Canada. Puget Sound is part of the Salish Sea that encompasses the Puget Sound of the United States and the Georgia Basin of Canada. Many pressures facing the Puget Sound ecosystem must be addressed on both sides of the border at the same time. Those pressures include the threat of oil spills, invasive species, wastewater, polluted runoff, air pollution, and climate change. Puget Sound recovery efforts are bolstered by close collaboration with our Canadian partners on scientific investigations, planning, and action implementation.

Relations between Canada and the United States federal natural resource agencies is guided by a Statement of Cooperation (SOC) between Environment Canada and the US Environmental Protection Agency. The SOC has a two-year work plan that guides collaborative work titled 2008-2010 Action Plan Initiatives for the Salish Sea (November 2008). The SOC and work plan is available at <http://www.epa.gov/pugetsound/partnerships/index.html>. Relations between the Province of British Columbia and Washington State are guided by an agreement signed by the Premier and Governor that created an Environmental Coordination Council.³⁶ The Coastal and Oceans Task Force was created to enhance collaboration between the state and province on ocean health. The Partnership and the provincial Ministry of the Environment have been working with the SOC workgroup to merge the state/provincial work plan on transboundary marine restoration efforts with the federal level plan to the extent possible. Elements of that work plan may be incorporated into topic-specific strategies in the Action Agenda.

Examples of ongoing collaboration with Canada

- Collaboration with Canada to host the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference in Washington in 2013. The Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference is widely recognized as critical to collaboration on science and policy issues related to Salish Sea recovery. It is the primary conduit for coordination and collaboration between Washington State and British Columbia. It is also important to scientists and policy makers working on Puget Sound issues without a trans-boundary component. Each conference has a strong first nations/tribal component and is therefore vital for the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and values into ecosystem recovery efforts. The administrative lead for the conference needs to be determined.
- Adoption of federal-state-provincial trans-boundary work plan and regular meetings to coordinate implementation of actions. (PSP, EPA)
- The Partnership is investigating whether a Canadian federal or provincial government agency should participate formally or in an ad hoc way on the Science Panel and Ecosystem Coordination Board

West Coast Collaboration. Puget Sound is also intricately related physically and politically to the Pacific Ocean. There are numerous on-going efforts to coordinate marine restoration efforts on the west coast of the United States. These include, but are not limited to:

³⁶ For final: Cite agreement.

- **State Ocean Caucus:** The Department of Ecology convenes representatives from state agencies that play a role in the management of coastal areas.
- **West Coast Governor’s Agreement:** The WCGA establishes a framework for collaboration between Washington, Oregon, California, and Alaska on a variety of issues including ocean health. The Department of Ecology also leads these coordination efforts.
- **The Pacific Coast Collaborative:** similar to the West Coast Governor’s Agreement and includes the Province of British Columbia.

Working with citizens: The Partnership recognizes that the actions of individual citizens are important in the overall effort to protect and restore Puget Sound. The Partnership works closely with citizens to promote extensive public awareness, education, and participation in Puget Sound recovery as outlined in the Partnership’s enabling statute (RCW 90.71.230 (g)). See Action Agenda Section D.5-7 for more detail.

The Puget Sound Partnership supports grassroots activities to help inform, engage, and promote stewardship. The Partnership developed and maintains ECO-Net, an active network of over 400 local education and outreach organizations who are helping to implement elements of the Action Agenda. The Partnership has also co-branded *Puget Sound Starts Here*, a regional media/social media campaign and uses new media such as social networking to increase the visibility of the overall effort to protect and restore Puget Sound and give citizens a chance to share their views, engage in actions that advance protection and recovery, and participate in innovative ways.

FOUNDATION FOR PUGET SOUND

The Partnership’s enabling legislation (RCW.90.71.240) authorizes the Executive Director, with approval of the Leadership Council, to create a nonprofit organization to help raise funds through activities such as charitable donations and other appropriate mechanisms; engage and educate the public about Puget Sound’s health and efforts to restore it, and perform similar activities. The Foundation for Puget Sound was created in 2008. While the Partnership and the Foundation work closely together, they are separate entities. The Partnership will develop and adopt a work plan by the end of 2012 to establish a board of directors and launch the Foundation. See the Action Agenda Funding Section for current steps.

II. Partnership agency roles and structure

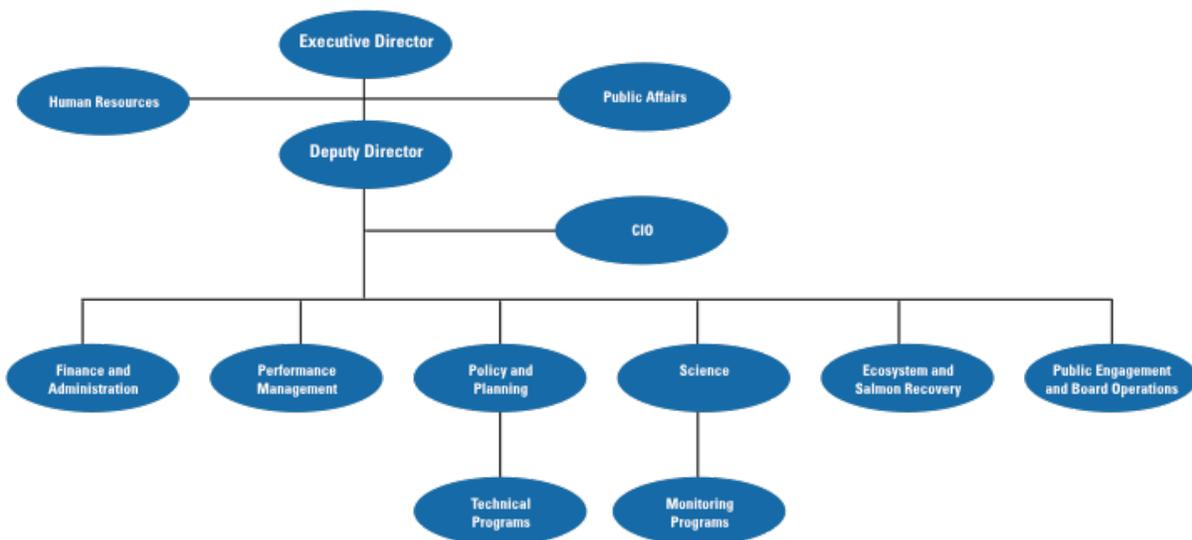
Roles of the Partnership Agency within the Management Conference

The Partnership has specific roles within the Management Conference. These roles are the backbone structure that makes the Management Conference function. Unique Partnership responsibilities are explained in Section D of the Action Agenda and include setting priorities through the target setting and adaptation of the Action Agenda, tracking and reporting on progress, implementing the strategic science program including the coordinated ecosystem monitoring program, and leading the regional behavior change and stewardship efforts. In addition, the Partnership leads work to implement key elements of the salmon recovery program (see Action Agenda Section A.9) and leads a few strategic policy initiatives (identified in Sections A-C of the Action Agenda).

Structure of the Partnership Agency

The Partnership agency is organized to successfully support long-term implementation of the Action Agenda and maintain the management conference. The Executive Director leads a team of six Departments: Finance and Administration, Performance Management, Policy and Planning, Science, Ecosystem and Salmon Recovery, and Public Education and Outreach. Figure A.2 depicts the agency organization. Brief department descriptions follow.

Puget Sound Partnership Agency Organization Chart



Executive Leadership. Provides strategic leadership and management oversight of the Puget Sound Partnership. This includes advancing the agency vision, building and maintaining strategic coalitions, and building momentum for decision-making and implementation across the Partnership boards and with external partners.

Finance and Administration. The Finance and Administration team manages the agency finances. The team has oversight of agency budgets, contracts, sub-awards, grants, and purchasing.

Performance Management. The Performance Management Team is responsible for overseeing the design and implementation of a performance management system for Puget Sound. This team leads data collection and reporting on implementation of actions and overall ecosystem recovery. For more information on specific functions, see Section D.3 of the Action Agenda.

Policy and Planning. The policy and planning team leads the adaptation work of the Action Agenda and leads key policy initiatives. The Partnership leads and engages on select strategic policy issues where regional leadership can provide consistency, bring an ecosystem perspective, advance the work beyond authorities of individual agencies, resolve conflicts, or are essential for the recovery of Puget Sound's ecosystem. These issues can be ongoing, emerging or time sensitive. Current policy assignments are identified in Sections A-C of the Action Agenda. Coordination with the EPA National Estuary Program and related agreements is housed in this department.

Science. The Science and Monitoring Program Team supports the Science Panel in the development and execution of a strategic science program, including the Ecosystem Monitoring Program and advancement of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation in Puget Sound. See Section D. 4 for specific details.

Ecosystem and Salmon Recovery. The Ecosystem & Salmon Recovery team works with salmon recovery watershed groups, tribes, state agencies, federal agencies, local governments and non-profits around Puget Sound to implement the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan. See Action Agenda Section A.9 for more specific information on the responsibilities of this program. The team has led the development of the Local Implementing Organizations to help integrate the local salmon recovery and other Puget Sound protection and restoration efforts. .

Public Engagement and Board Operations. The Public Engagement and Board Operations team is responsible for leading the social strategies of the Action Agenda (see Action Agenda Section D5-7), supporting the work of the Partnership's boards, and managing the agency's graphics, web and social media. The team also coordinates graphic design, branding, web, and social media applications to stay connected with the public and our many partners. In addition, the team supports and facilitates the work of the Leadership Council, the Science Panel and the Ecosystem Coordination Board.

III. Management Conference Decision Making

The Leadership Council sets the strategic direction to guide the work of the Partnership and meet its statutory obligations. Prior to setting direction or making decisions, the Leadership Council is typically presented with a broad proposal or concept by the Executive Director and staff. As appropriate, the Leadership Council may request specific input, ask questions, or seek advice from the Ecosystem Coordination Board, Science Panel, or lead implementing agencies as well as organizations involved in Puget Sound recovery and interested members of the public. Depending on the issues and timing, special meetings or work sessions may be held to seek input from relevant experts and partners. Recommendations or suggestions from these discussions will be incorporated into a revised presentation to the Leadership Council. As much as possible, the meetings of the Ecosystem

Coordination Board and Science Panel are staggered and structured to provide timely input to the Leadership Council.

Major decisions that use this approach may include annual and biennial work plans for Partnership activities, review of state agency budget requests and legislation, submission of proposals for federal grants (including those for the National Estuary Program) and Action Agenda adaptive management decisions that result in new and/or changed actions, particularly when resulting in a strategic directional shift or revision to the Action Agenda.

Using the Partnership's adopted Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, Figure 3 illustrates a preliminary conceptual framework that guides decision-making within the Management Conference. The model depicts inputs from science, performance management and policy. Each of the partners in our region may play one or more of these roles depending on the decision that is under consideration. The conceptual framework will be expanded to include how additional tools and processes will specifically inform decision-making (e.g. monitoring data, public outreach, integration of existing regional and national data).