



February 2, 2012

Action Agenda Update Coordinator  
Puget Sound Partnership  
326 East D Street  
Tacoma, WA 98421

Dear Puget Sound Partnership Representative,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2012 Puget Sound Action Agenda. The comments included in this letter reflect the opinion of the twelve Puget Sound Conservation Districts that are part of the Puget Sound Conservation Districts Caucus (PSCD Caucus). Individually and as a group we have identified significant overlap between the 2012 Puget Sound Action Agenda strategies and the historical activities and services of conservation districts and the Washington State conservation district statutory mandate.

Conservation district statute, Chapter 89.08.220 RCW, provides a broad suite of corporate powers to address local natural resource concerns. These powers include but are not limited to conducting research, educational activities and natural resource improvement projects; working with landowners and residents to improve conservation of natural resources; and preparing and updating a long-range plan for the conservation of all renewable natural resources within the boundaries of individual conservation districts. Our corporate powers uniquely position Puget Sound conservation districts to directly and positively impact the health of Puget Sound, as well as to partner with the Puget Sound Partnership on Action Agenda strategies and priorities. With the simple commitment on the part of the Partnership to recognize, utilize, and invest in the Puget Sound Conservation District network, we can more efficiently and effectively accomplish the goals set forth in the Puget Sound Action Agenda together.

Washington State conservation districts have a track record of over 70 years of conserving natural resources on the private land base in Washington. At the heart of the success of the conservation district system in the Puget Sound region as well as state-wide, is our established model of voluntary stewardship. This model is predicated on our commitment to a three-fold approach, which includes education, technical assistance, and financial incentives. And the approach – our stewardship services delivery system – is proven successful, is staffed with a robust network of professionally trained service providers, and is the essential ingredient in cultivating durable environmental stewardship behavior and the implementation of conservation practices on private property. Additionally, Puget Sound Conservation Districts have expanded their delivery system in recent years to include not only our long standing relationship with agricultural and forest landowners but to also

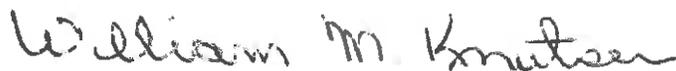
address the environmental stewardship needs of urban and rural residential property owners. Puget Sound Conservation Districts are poised to increase capacity to deliver stewardship services to these and other audiences on a much larger scale. It is our hope that the Partnership will welcome this opportunity to capitalize on this established system of local leadership and on the ground conservation, which is a “good to go” and “shovel-ready” system that represents an essential piece of the Puget Sound recovery puzzle and that consistently delivers results.

We would like to take this opportunity to acquaint you with the attached copy of the Puget Sound Conservation Districts Action Agenda. This document, which was prepared in 2009 and previously submitted to the Partnership, details the breadth of stewardship services and activities conducted by the twelve Puget Sound conservation districts, and calls attention to the alignment of those services with the 2020 Action Agenda strategies and priorities that was released in 2009. The PSCD Action Agenda is still relevant today, and the respective conservation districts continue to look forward to collaborating with the Partnership on the delivery of the services treated therein.

With regard to our statutory authorization to prepare long-range plans for the conservation of all renewable natural resources within the boundaries of individual conservation districts, and because our annual and long range plans address a broad range of natural resource concerns, we encourage the Partnership and the Local Integrating Organizations to recognize the opportunity inherent in these planning processes to address shared natural resource management priorities. Additionally, the Boards of the twelve Puget Sound Conservation Districts invite the Local Integrating Organizations to contribute to the development of individual conservation district annual and long range plans as a part of the Partnership’s effort to implement the strategies included in the 2012 Action Agenda.

The Puget Sound Conservation Districts also invite the Ecosystem Recovery Network coordinators and the ECO NET coordinators to contact the local conservation districts that share boundaries with the various Action Areas in an effort to learn more about the activities of those Districts and to collaborate on addressing shared resource management priorities. Puget Sound Conservation Districts are the link to achieving on the ground implementation of natural resource management practices on private property, and we are eager to see the Partnership recognize, utilize, and invest in this established stewardship services delivery system.

Regards,



Bill Knusten  
Chair, King Conservation District  
*(On behalf of the twelve Puget Sound Conservation Districts)*

Enclosures (1)

Cc: PSP Salmon & Ecosystem Recovery / Local Implementation Team: Jeanette Dorner, Susan O'Neil, Tristan Peter-Contesse, Rebecca Ponzio, Morgan Schneider, Scott Williamson