W7 The Upstream-Downstream Connection—Gaining Knowledge to Strengthen the Relationships

Draft Platform Statement
1-17-05

Introduction to Platform Statements

This "platform statement" is one of nine papers drafted to stimulate discussion and make progress on topics related to salmon recovery that cross all the Puget Sound watersheds. These platform statements are not intended to represent positions or decisions of any individual or organization. Rather, they have been developed by the Shared Strategy staff and others and are intended to describe the ideas and questions that have been identified to date by a variety of people working on these issues.

The expectation is that together, Shared Strategy participants will be able to forge a regional consensus on how to make progress on the ideas and questions identified in the papers and that these ideas will be incorporated into the draft regional recovery plan submitted to NOAA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this June.

Under the Endangered Species Act, a recovery plan must identify the threats to survival, the actions necessary to address the threats, measures for delisting, cost of the actions and a schedule for implementation. In the Shared Strategy, all governments and interest groups agreed to add to the federal requirements by including commitments to implement the plan to ensure its success. This will be the first recovery plan ever developed through a partnership of affected parties that includes commitments for implementation.

The Puget Sound recovery plan will be a living document that evolves and improves over time through implementation. Parts of it will be well defined by June, and other parts will need more work in the future, due to limited knowledge, resources or current political or public commitments. Where additional detail is needed to address a significant threat to salmon survival, the plan must provide a schedule with measurable decision points for how the gap will be filled.

We encourage your comments at the Summit or by directly contacting the Shared Strategy staff. It will be most helpful for you to indicate where the draft statement is generally heading in the right direction and how to take it further to help achieve recovery goals, as well as to identify which questions or issues will need to be addressed at a future time.

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Background
Under the Endangered Species Act, recovery plans must address threats to the listed species and factors limiting their recovery. For salmon recovery to be effective a plan must define the protection and restoration actions necessary to address the threats and limits in each watershed and the marine environment across all of Puget Sound. This comprises the land and water from each river's headwaters to the Sound, including estuaries, shorelines, and the marine ecosystem. Factors related to fish harvest and hatchery management practices, hydropower effects and habitat all need to be covered by the plan. The recovery plan has to describe the various federal, state and local regulations affecting salmon habitat and have a plan for measuring the results from compliance actions over time. As such, recovery plans need to incorporate and describe the expected result for salmon from all recovery-related actions that have been proposed or are being implemented by various entities across the region.

From the forests to the Sound
All forest lands in Washington State are managed to standards that comply with the Endangered Species Act including federal forest plans and various Habitat Conservation Plans. The focus of this paper is on the state's Forests and Fish Law and its connection to Puget Sound salmon recovery planning efforts.

The Forests and Fish Law, a product of the Forests and Fish Agreement (F&F) was enacted in 1999 with permanent rules to implement it adopted in 2001 by the Forest Practices Board. It is one of the regulatory programs included in the Puget Sound salmon recovery plan and its successful implementation is a key element for the overall recovery of salmon.

The Puget Sound recovery plan identifies damage from past forest practices among the factors that contributed to salmon declines. The updated rules changed how non-federal and non-tribal forest lands in Washington State will be managed to protect key habitat functions and maintain an economically viable timber industry. There is general acknowledgement that it will take many years to see the effect of those changes on the ground. The monitoring and adaptive management program is therefore a critical mechanism in the rules for making adjustments if needed based on scientific research.

Specifically, F&F's stated purpose is to provide protection for fish habitat and water quality on non-federal and non-tribal forest lands by changing the way forest managers build and maintain roads, protect riparian habitat and unstable slopes, and monitor the effects of on-the-ground forest management activities. The Forest Practices Board established monitoring and research objectives and performance targets for "key aquatic habitat functions" fish need for survival. Initial areas of study and monitoring include: temperature, large woody debris, sediment, hydrology, chemicals, stream-typing and fish passage.

Specific to F&F, the important questions for the Puget Sound recovery program to answer are:

- How will the forests and fish rules and compliance activities on non-federal and non-Tribal forest lands contribute to recovery?
- How can the results of forests and fish actions be quantified and integrated with the results of other habitat actions in the recovery plan?

The first question may be answered in a general way by citing the F&F rules and how they are structured to contribute. The challenge for local planners in individual Puget Sound river basins is how to answer this question specifically in their recovery chapter. This is particularly true for watersheds with large land areas covered by forests where they have specific questions unique to their watershed about how F&F compliance actions contribute to recovery. As this paper discusses later, F&F is not structured to answer detailed questions for individual watersheds, but a solution to this dilemma for the local chapters is possible through education and dialogue between F&F stakeholders and salmon recovery groups.

The second question about quantifying and integrating F&F results with those of other habitat actions is being addressed in part through the "Intensively Monitored Watersheds for Effectiveness Monitoring (IMW)," a partnership between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Ecology, and Forests and Fish. F&F's Cooperative Monitoring Evaluation and Research committee (CMER) has allocated $2.3M to this program in their work plan to 2010.

The idea behind IMW is that the complex relationships controlling salmon response to habitat conditions can be understood by concentrating and integrating monitoring and research efforts at a few locations. IMW is an efficient method of achieving the level of sampling intensity necessary to determine the response of salmon to a set of management actions, including those in F&F. It is hoped that the information from this research can be applied to many watersheds. In those cases where the information is not readily transferable, local watersheds may need to develop their own research and monitoring plans to answer the integration question over time.

Over time, through a combination of monitoring and research by F&F and by salmon recovery groups, the above questions will be answered. However, this will require forging a long-term relationship between people working on F&F and Puget Sound salmon recovery.

A long-term relationship is desirable for both F&F and salmon recovery groups because they share a common interest in:

- Increasing certainty and confidence that the investments being made both upstream and downstream in Puget Sound watersheds will pay off.
- Developing a workable approach for forestry interests and watershed interests to communicate both about what is being learned through research and monitoring and about other topics of mutual concern.
- Identifying specific areas, in addition to monitoring and adaptive management, where coordination is mutually beneficial and practical.

The above statements can serve as general goals on which to focus the relationship, and when achieved, will help answer the above questions for the salmon recovery program.

Refining and advancing the ideas in this platform statement

The remainder of this platform statement provides background information about the two efforts in relation to each other. It acknowledges the common strengths and interests, constraints and pressures, and concerns about the two efforts. It asks both forest managers through F&F and groups involved in salmon recovery to agree to pursue productive ways to connect the two efforts over the long term to the mutual benefit of all while respecting differences and constraints.

To advance the platform statement, participants in the Shared Strategy Summit break-out session on this topic will be asked to consider the following questions:

1. How can we support an ongoing linkage between F&F and salmon recovery groups over time to help them achieve desired habitat improvement goals for salmon?
2. Has this paper identified the most important goals and opportunities for coordination between the two programs? If not, what is missing?
3. How can we move forward constructively to work toward achieving mutual goals while acknowledging and respecting differences?

Common strengths and interests

F&F and Puget Sound salmon recovery share common strengths and interests to support building a good working relationship and to support each other in meeting desired habitat improvement goals for salmon.

- **Both programs recognized as strongest of their kind**

F&F is recognized by many as having the most rigorous regulations of its kind in the country with the commitment of the Federal and state agencies, most Tribes, Local governments, and private forest landowners to implement it. The Puget Sound recovery plan, still under development, is expected to have the strongest commitments from local communities for implementation of its kind for any listed species. Both F&F and the recovery plan emphasize implementing actions on-the-ground, testing the effectiveness of those actions against goals and targets, and making changes as new information is learned over time.

- **Commitment to both salmon and economic vitality**

Both F&F and the Puget Sound salmon recovery approach recognize the value of vibrant natural resource economies, the importance of preserving working lands, and the necessity of protecting and restoring ecosystems. Both have stated goals that commit to actions and solutions that address the needs for both salmon and economic vitality.

- **Mutual desire for investments to pay off**

Both F&F and watershed recovery groups want to be sure that investments being made upstream and downstream in Puget Sound watersheds will pay off. For example, F&F leaders are interested in coordinating restoration activities such as removal of fish passage barriers and other improvements where it makes sense.

Conversely, watershed groups are interested in sharing information collected in the lower watershed that would also benefit the upper watershed. Both efforts would gain from knowing more about each other's plans and from understanding better what information each needs to have from the other to help them maximize their respective investments.

- **Opportunity to learn from each other and coordinate activities**

It is in everyone's best interest to develop a practical approach for forestry and watershed interests to communicate about what is being learned through their respective adaptive management programs and about topics of mutual concern. There are also opportunities where coordination of certain activities might be mutually beneficial and practical such as coordinating barrier removals up and down stream, fundraising for small forest landowner incentives, fundraising to carry out research and monitoring projects, and working together to build needed political and public support. It should be possible to save costs by sharing monitoring and research information and by coordinating activities of mutual interest.

Constraints, pressures and concerns

It is important to acknowledge, understand and respect the issues that can make it difficult or challenging for the two efforts to connect effectively. These can be addressed once people agree on common goals, clarify roles to achieve them and remain committed to working through or respecting constraints and areas of difference.

- **Concerns about future results on both sides**

One of the challenges to effectively connecting F&F and watershed recovery groups stems from the history of their development. The development of the Forests and Fish agreement and the Shared Strategy recovery planning process have occurred on separate tracks, along slightly different time frames, have involved different people, and have experienced limited communication between them. In addition, Forests and Fish is a state-based plan while watershed planning is done on a local basis. This means that the respective needs and goals of the two efforts were not correlated early on, contributing to some of the questions about effectiveness and adequacy expressed about both.

Groups involved in both F&F and salmon recovery continue to have concerns about the long-term effectiveness respectively of both the F&F rules and the salmon recovery plan. Since both recognize the inter-dependent effects various land-use activities have on the ecosystem, they want some level of certainty that their respective investments pay off. To date, groups in the two efforts have had limited and sometimes unsatisfactory interactions that would help them understand each other's needs and constraints better and build confidence in each other's programs.

If we can all agree that it is in our mutual interest for F&F and Puget Sound salmon recovery to forge a productive relationship, then we must agree that while we may have differences or worries about each other's efforts, we can work together. The question and focus then becomes: what can we work on together to the mutual interests of both efforts?

- **Differences in scale, scope goals, roles and results tracking**

Some of the challenges for connecting F&F with watershed recovery stem from differences in geographic scale, scope, goals, roles and how results are tracked and measured. These differences make it particularly difficult to answer the question: how can the effects of forests and fish compliance actions be quantified and integrated with the effects of other habitat actions in the recovery plan?

	Forest and Fish	Puget Sound Recovery Plan
Geographic scale	State-wide, sub-divided into East and West Washington	Watershed-based, rolled up into Puget Sound basin
Scope	--Habitat only --Multi-species (fish--listed and not, and specific amphibians)	--All 4 H's: habitat, fish harvest, hatchery and hydro management - --listed salmon species (although some local chapters include non-listed salmon species as well)
Goals	Regulatory compliance on non-federal forest lands to meet ESA & CWA requirements; restore & maintain riparian habitat to support harvestable supply of fish; keep timber industry economically viable	Recover and maintain an abundance of naturally spawning salmon at harvestable levels; support viability of natural resource economies in context of recovery
Roles	Manage habitat functions	Recover salmon populations
Results tracking, measuring	By resource objectives (e.g. water temperature) and performance targets for East or West Washington	By salmon population viability parameters (VSP): abundance, productivity, spatial distribution and diversity

Ultimately, the objectives of F&F and the salmon recovery plan are the same—to bring sustainable, harvestable populations of salmon back. The main challenge in the above differences lies in the fact that tracking and measuring results occur at different scales and focus on related but different objectives.

F&F is focused on habitat management as the key forest practices contribution toward salmon recovery. Monitoring information tracks the effectiveness of forest practices toward achieving habitat suitable for the protection and recovery of fish populations. The Puget Sound Recovery Plan, on the other hand, intends to track recovery through monitoring fish populations. This approach must eventually take into account the broader cumulative effects of harvest management, hatchery influence, ocean conditions and freshwater habitat in order to identify factors contributing to salmon population growth or decline.

Once these differences and their implications for connecting the two programs are better understood, it should be easier to figure out how to work effectively together, to determine: what types of data are readily available, what types may be harder to collect, what types are better gathered and provided by others outside the F&F program, and so on.

Strengthening the relationships

Anyone involved with salmon recovery knows that it will take decades before this important economic and cultural icon is once again hale and hearty. While much is already known to start us moving toward a positive trajectory, most scientists and planners also agree that we still have a great deal to learn about what will help bring the salmon back. More to the point, we have

much to learn about how to bring the salmon back while meeting other human land use needs, and about how to understand and achieve the balance that is best for both people and fish.

Monitoring and research closely tied to adaptive management programs are key to the ongoing learning process necessary to achieve recovery goals and enjoy economic prosperity. F&F and salmon recovery groups can help each other over time by sharing what they learn from their respective monitoring and research efforts.

There will be informational needs that F&F does not or should not be expected to provide due to the differences in the table above related to the upper portions of *individual* watersheds and to direct fish results. Others, at the state, tribal, regional or watershed levels will need to craft adaptive management programs to address informational needs unique to specific geographic areas and to evaluating the results of actions on fish populations.

Indeed, developing adaptive management programs for both local chapters and the regional plan is work that remains to be done, and questions about who is best positioned to gather needed information not covered by F&F or other programs, for that matter, is one of the questions that needs to be resolved. How to achieve economies of scale by allocating and coordinating monitoring and adaptive management activities is another question that should be considered.

F&F adaptive management program

Current scientific knowledge lacks the certainty to answer all pertinent questions associated with the forest practices rules. To gain the answers that allow the dynamic nature of the science to evolve, Forests and Fish envisioned an Adaptive Management Program to address the effectiveness of forest practices rules in aiding the State's salmon recovery effort, and to provide recommendation to the Forest Practices Board on proposed changes to forest practices rules to meet timber industry viability and salmon recovery.

Since Forests and Fish has laid out a specific adaptive management program with identified resource objectives, performance targets and research questions, we can begin here to understand more fully how F&F compliance, monitoring and research activities will guide changes in forest management based on science. Salmon recovery planners at all levels can incorporate this understanding as they craft their monitoring and adaptive management programs to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Creating a Synergy between Forest and Fish and Salmon Recovery for the Long-term

To take advantage of potential synergies between F&F and salmon recovery efforts, it is necessary to establish ongoing coordination and communication linkages. It requires us to jointly answer the questions posed in the beginning of this paper.

1. How can we support an ongoing linkage between F&F and salmon recovery groups over time to help them achieve desired habitat improvement goals for salmon?
2. Has this paper identified the most important goals and opportunities for coordination between the two programs? If not, what is missing?
3. How can we move forward constructively to work toward achieving mutual goals while acknowledging and respecting differences?

The On-going Linkage

An on-going linkage can most efficiently and effectively occur between the existing F&F policy group and the Puget Sound recovery implementation organization (TBD). The future salmon recovery implementation organization can serve as a bridge between local watersheds and F&F. The groups would continue to refine the ongoing relationship and coordinate activities that emerge as desirable and offering mutual benefit.

A starter list of opportunities to coordinate various activities to the mutual benefit of both F&F and salmon recovery interests includes:

- Sharing lessons learned from monitoring and research activities.
- Communicating monitoring and research needs and the studies underway for habitat functions covered by F&F, and communicating about monitoring and research needs and programs that will be covered by others.
- Coordinating restoration efforts such as sequencing of fish passage barrier projects from the lower to the upper watershed.
- Working together on legislation and fundraising where mutually beneficial.
- Coordinating public education and outreach where mutually beneficial.
- Working together to help small forest land owners implement fish-friendly practices without undue economic hardship.

The two efforts need to find productive ways to work together and coordinate efforts—the connection between the upper and lower watershed ecosystem requires it.