

Shared Strategy for Puget Sound Comments on April 2006 Three Year Work Plan East Kitsap

Introduction

In April, 2006, watersheds submitted three-year work programs that would enable them to get on a recovery trajectory in the first three years of implementation. The work programs were reviewed by the Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team (TRT) and the Shared Strategy Interdisciplinary Policy Team. The technical and policy review comments are provided below.

This feedback is intended to assist your watershed as you refine your three-year work program and continue with implementation of the East Kitsap recovery plan. The feedback will also be used by the TRT and Shared Strategy Work Group to inform the development of the regional work program. A summary of the watersheds' work programs was developed by Shared Strategy staff to stimulate discussion on recovery objectives to determine what the best investments are for salmon recovery over the next three years.

Objectives for the development of work programs

The following objectives were provided as guidance to watersheds in the development of their work programs. The Shared Strategy Work Group and TRT developed the objectives pursuant to consultation with watershed recovery plan implementation leads and the Recovery Council.

- Improve the level and certainty of protection for habitat
- Protect the twenty two existing Chinook populations by beginning to address the most immediate and potentially greatest threats that could cause populations to decline in this timeframe
- Preserve options for increasing ESU diversity
- Restore ecosystem processes for Chinook and other species by preserving options for habitat restoration, and by addressing the most immediate and potentially greatest threats in
 - estuarines
 - mainstem
 - upper watershed
 - freshwater tributaries and nearshore
 - water quality and quantity
- Advance the integrated management of harvest, hatchery and habitat to address the most immediate and potentially greatest threats
- Continue to expand and deepen individual and community support for key priorities
- Develop and implement adaptive management and monitoring program
 - monitoring
 - accountability system for evaluation and decision making
- Build capacity in each watershed to implement the full breadth of prioritized programs and projects needed to get on a recovery trajectory in the first three years
- Support multi-species

I. Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team Review

The TRT reviewed fourteen individual watershed salmon recovery three-year work programs in May 2006. Three questions were addressed:

1. Is the work program consistent with the hypotheses and strategy for their watershed? *(The “plan” includes hypotheses and strategies in the larger plan, including watershed plan, TRT May 2005 technical comments, and NOAA Supplement comments).*
2. Is the sequencing and timing of their work plan appropriate for the first three years of implementation?
3. Are there significant components missing from the work plan? If so, what are they? What can be done about them in the three-year work plan?

Consistency with hypotheses and strategy

Yes. The geographic focus of the work plan is the nearshore environment, consistent with the East Kitsap’s role in recovery. Actions target three pocket estuaries along the shoreline, completion of a shoreline inventory, and development of a shoreline stewardship program.

Sequencing and Timing

Yes. The work program contemplates only a few actions whose timing and sequence are not as critical as they might be in large riverine systems. Two components of the work program plan are critical: the development of a salmon recovery planning and implementation organization, and completion of the assessment of the remaining Kitsap shoreline.

Significant components missing

Further acquisitions consistent with the Kitsap Refugia study seem to be absent. These could be included as actions in the plan quite easily. An adaptive management component is not called out in the plan.

Comments on objectives:

1. Improve the level and certainty of protection for habitat and the 22 existing populations.

Somewhat. The three year work program does not contemplate further direct protection actions. However, the restoration focus on the three pocket estuaries and Chico Creek provide a measure of habitat recovery and protection for nearshore habitats critical to population protection.

2. Preserve options for achieving the future role of this population in the ESU.

Since East Kitsap has no independent population, this plan does not directly address this objective. However, recovery of shoreline habitats is critical to persistence for those populations that migrate along this area. A significant limitation to preserve options—an adaptive management plan—is not in place.

3. *Ensure protection and restoration preserves and restores ecosystem processes for Chinook.* Moderate. This is most evident in Chico Creek where restoration is aimed at recovery of a functioning watershed. However, this three year work program does not advance the larger plan's geomorphic and ecological shoreline perspective.

4. *Advance the integrated management of harvest, hatchery and habitat.*

The work program does not advance the integrated management among the Hs. There is a hatchery-wild interaction study proposed in the plan but no other harvest or hatchery actions are contemplated in this work plan.

It is important that watershed recovery planners refer to the May 2005 Technical Gap Analysis to ensure that uncertainties are addressed in the adaptive management plan and work program refinements.

II. Policy Review Comments

The Shared Strategy Interdisciplinary Policy Team evaluated each of the fourteen watershed work plans. The following questions guided the evaluation of the work plans.

1. Is the work program consistent with the policy feedback and recommendations from the 2004 documents ("Watershed Policy Feedback Summaries", Recovery Plan December 2005, Volume I, Watershed Profiles results sections, Vol. II, Regional Nearshore and Marine chapter, and NOAA's federal supplement published in the Federal Register on Dec. 16, 2005)?
2. Is the work program tied to the objectives identified at a pace sufficient to achieve the watershed's ten-year goals?
3. Are there significant elements missing and how might these be addressed?

The interdisciplinary policy review team noted strengths of the East Kitsap three-year work program as well as well as uncertainties and gaps that were identified in other watersheds' programs. The strengths and specific comments are provided below, followed by a short discussion of comments common to all watersheds.

Strengths:

- The work program is specific and addresses critical components of the recovery plan
- The Kitsap shoreline assessment to ensure future protection (restoration) is included in the work program. This is a key component of the watershed's contribution to ESU recovery.
- The projects identified in the work program appear to be well within the capacity of the watershed's capacity to implement
- The work program acknowledges the need to address watershed organizational structure and issues.

Special issue

It is important that the East Kitsap recovery planning group review its organizational structure and relationships with entities within the geographic boundaries of WRIA 15 that do not appear

to be incorporated into the recovery planning process. Closer coordination with the South Sound recovery planning team could benefit both groups.

Elements in common with other watershed work programs

All Puget Sound watersheds' work program refinements and recovery plan implementation activities will benefit from additional efforts to achieve H-Integration and the development of an adaptive management plan. Protecting and restoring ecosystem processes for Chinook and other species by preserving options and addressing threats is a critical component of recovery planning both at the local and regional scale. Strengthening the capacity to implement needed actions and to expand and deepen support for recovery program objectives is critical to ESU recovery. Recommendations to stimulate discussions on how to achieve these objectives are contained in a Shared Strategy document entitled "Watershed Work Plans Related to Key Puget Sound Recovery Objectives".

As is true with technical feedback, it is important that the watershed continue to refer to the 2005 policy feedback and regional recovery plan (Volume I) as it refines recovery plan components and work programs. As the work plan is refined, it will also be helpful for the watershed to review the December 2005 draft recovery plan chapter "Regional, Watershed and Marine Aspects of Salmon Recovery in Puget Sound", with particularly close attention to the sub-basin evaluations.