

# **Shared Strategy for Puget Sound Comments on April 2007 Three Year Work Program Update (West Sound/East Kitsap)**

## Introduction

In April 2007, watersheds submitted three-year work program updates on accomplishments and proposed actions that built on the 2006 three year work program they developed to get on a recovery trajectory in the first three years of implementation.

This feedback is intended to assist the watershed recovery plan implementation team as it continues to address actions and implementation of their salmon recovery plan. The feedback is also being used by the TRT and Recovery Council Work Group to inform the continued development and implementation of the regional work program components such as adaptive management. The feedback will also stimulate further discussion on recovery objectives to determine what the best investments are for salmon recovery over the next three years.

## Guidance for the 2007 work program updates

Guidance for the preparation of the 3 year Work Program update emphasized the importance of stating what has changed in the Update of the 3-year Work Program from the prior adopted Work Program. Watersheds were asked to:

- Describe why you have made the changes proposed, including rationale for including omitting or changing the rank of a project
- Describe any adjustments related to considering sequencing, timing, or H-Integration issues
- Discuss the status of implementation of your three year work program. – what have you accomplished in terms of the priority actions, what have you struggled with and how you resolved it, and provide suggestions, if the issues were not resolved, how we might work together to improve the situation in the future.

The guidance for preparation of the work program update provided the following as factors to be considered by the Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team in performing its technical review of the Update

- a. Is the Update consistent with the hypotheses and strategy for the watershed's work Program?
- b. Is the sequencing and timing of the action sin your updated 3-Year work Program appropriate for this first full year of implementation of the Puget sound Salmon Recovery Plan>
- c. Are there significant components missing from the work program? Is so, that are these and what can be done about them in the three-year work program update or at a regional scale?

Watersheds were provided with the following 7 questions that the Recovery Council Work Group would address in performing its policy review of the Three-Year Work Program

1. Is the work program consistent with the policy feedback and recommendations from the 2004 documents, Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan (See Volume I, Watershed Profiles – Results sections, and the NMFS supplement to the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan, as well as the regional nearshore chapter guidance, where applicable?
2. Is the work program tied to the identified three-year objectives and scheduled to proceed at a pace sufficient to achieve the watershed’s ten year goals?>
3. Is the work program narrative tightly linked to individual projects s and priorities?
4. To what extent do programmatic actions address protection identified in the work program and non-capital project list?
5. To what extent are habitat, harvest and habitat actions integrated and included in the work program?
6. To what extent does the work program address the watershed’s capacity to implement the updated three year work program?

Guidance noted that the Work Group would also examine the objectives of the three year work Program and how well the program addresses them. This includes considering whether the Work Program Update:

- Improves the level and certainty of protection for habitat and the 22 existing Chinook populations;
- Preserves options for achieving the future role of this population in the ESU;
- Ensures protection and restoration preserves and restores ecosystem processes for Chinook, and
- Advances the coordinated/integrated management of harvest, hatchery and habitat

## **I. Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team Review**

The TRT reviewed fourteen individual watershed salmon recovery three-year work program updates in April and early May 2007. Three questions were addressed. The questions and the TRT’s review comments are below.

### **West Sound Watersheds (East Kitsap)**

#### **Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team**

The work program includes the entire eastern portion of WRIA 15--the same geographic area as the East Kitsap Lead Entity—and now includes a greater area than that in the previous East Kitsap work program, having added activities in the South Sound nearshore. The change in name reflects the increase in participation and substantial progress in the development of a functional salmon recovery organization.

#### **TRT Questions**

1. *Is their work program consistent with the hypotheses and strategy for their watershed?*

Yes. As in the first 3-year implementation plan, this work program is consistent with the hypotheses and strategy for the watershed. Without an independent population but with many miles of shoreline, the recovery hypotheses are directed at the necessary improvement of the ecological function of the nearshore ecosystem to support the multiple species and populations that likely use the East Kitsap nearshore for growth and refuge. A second hypothesis suggests that successful implementation of the recovery plan requires an effective recovery organization. It is worth noting that the strategy for implementing this plan has three components: the establishment of a recovery organization, the completion of a nearshore assessment, and the implementation of several restoration projects.

2. *Is the sequencing and timing of their work program appropriate for this 3-year implementation phase?*

Yes. The work plan contemplates a number of actions whose predicted outcome is unlikely to be strongly dependent on the sequence and timing of their implementation, at least in this early phase of recovery. As these early projects are implemented, however, and begin to function as predicted, the location, sequence, and timing of subsequent actions will take on added significance. An exception to this general observation is the timing for the development of the recovery and implementation organization. The more quickly this organization can become fully functional as the main organizing body, the more likely that the critical, early steps in nearshore recovery can be realized.

3. *Are there significant components missing from the work plan? If so, what are they? What can be done about them in the 3-year work plan?*

The update, itself, recognizes two omissions in the work program: all H-integration and adaptive management. H-integration is problematic for most watersheds and the work program indicates that WDFW is delaying this discussion for this area. Nevertheless, some progress could be made in evaluating and predicting potential interactions among various “H” management objectives in the West Sound nearshore. For example, the ecological framework and existing data might provide some useful information about interactions among various salmon species using the nearshore for feeding. Evidence of spatial and temporal overlaps (along with growth data) could allow some hypotheses to be formulated about nearshore carrying capacity and the functional distribution of ecosystem attributes. This information can be used to estimate the effect of habitat, harvest and hatchery programs on ameliorating any artificial constraints on capacity.

Although the PSTRT agrees that a fully functional recovery organization is critical to the long-term application of adaptive management, the certainty of long-term success also depends on developing and implementing some aspects of adaptive management during these very early stages of recovery. It would be useful to examine the approach discussed in Schueller et al. for some guidance in the development of the initial objectives and indicators that inform any monitoring and evaluation. (See <http://www.snre.umich.edu/ecomgt/evaluation/tools.htm>). A fully formed adaptive management plan is desirable but not required at this stage of the implementation work. Nevertheless, crafting a framework, predictions, indicators, and metrics that allow early

action-specific information to be used in a longer term assessment of ecosystem function is critical to increasing the certainty of recovery. Furthermore, updates to the Shoreline Master Programs, and an amendment to the Bainbridge Island Critical Area code, are contemplated for the last two years of this work program, both highlighted in the recovery plan as important protective mechanisms. Given the *a priori* judgment of adequacy in the recovery plan, these regulations could be among the first subjects of adaptive management.

We assume that monitoring and evaluation plans accompany the various projects proposed in the 2008-2010 work program; if that is not so, then the development of M & E plans and the collection of suitable data prior to project implementation would seem to be a logical step. The PSTRT suggests that predictions be made about the outcome of each project and about the cumulative effect of the implemented action *group* on the VSP parameters of interest in the WRIA 15 nearshore.

### **Shared Strategy Objectives**

*1. Improve the level and certainty of protection for habitat and the 22 existing populations.* The work program contains three elements important to increasing the level and certainty of habitat and population protection: the scheduled nearshore assessment will fill an important gap in knowledge, the inclusion of updates for the shoreline master programs affords an opportunity for system-wide collaboration and consistency, and the list of projects in various small estuaries increases the capacity of the nearshore system. This combination of activities meets the objective with more certainty than the initial 3-year work program.

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

Since there is no independent population within the East Kitsap planning area, the work program does not directly address this objective. However, since the Kitsap nearshore environment is likely to be important to many populations—especially those from mid- and south Sound—restoration and protection of this environment is a necessary element for preserving options for many populations. A significant limitation for preserving options, the adaptive management plan remains incomplete, however, and was noted in the 2006 review as well. Development and application of some early predictions, indicators, and criteria would reduce the uncertainty associated with the various nearshore projects.

*3. Ensure protection and restoration preserves and restores ecosystem processes for Chinook salmon.*

Moderate. The work program meets this objective most successfully at a project scale where restoration activities often seek to eliminate barriers, eliminate impediments to water and fish movement, or to rehabilitate some structural aspect of habitat such as a riparian zone. Each of these projects will affect ecosystem processes although it is not entirely clear from the project descriptions just what processes will be improved and what the rate and magnitude of improvement is predicted to be. Two projects—Chico Creek and Pritchard Park East Bluff—are clear exceptions and are intended to directly restore some hydrologic or geomorphic process.

At the larger scale where habitats throughout the nearshore are linked by sediment transport processes, migration, and trophic processes, the work program is less robust. A more explicit use of the plan's ecological shoreline perspective would aid in the development of activities at a scale commensurate with the scale of various nearshore processes and increase the certainty of improvement associated with the projects and actions.

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

The implementation of H-integration discussions and activities in this area has been delayed. No integration activities are described in this 3-year work program. In the PSTRT's view, many, if not most, of the participants necessary to consider integration are present in the work group. Beginning the initial discussions of integration, perhaps based on questions posed by the TRT in its working paper on Integration for Salmon Recovery (attached), will reduce the uncertainty associated with further delay.

## **II. Policy Review Comments**

The Recovery Council Work Group, an interdisciplinary policy team, evaluated each of the fourteen watershed work plans. The following questions guided the evaluation of the work plans updates.

1. Is the work program update consistent with the policy feedback and recommendations from the 2004 policy feedback summary, Recovery Plan Watershed Profiles - Results section, and NOAA's Federal Supplement?
2. Is the work program update tied to the objectives identified and at a pace sufficient to achieve the watershed's ten year goals?
3. Are there significant elements missing and how might these be addressed?

In addressing these three questions, the interdisciplinary team noted accomplishments and strengths of the three year work program update and also identified and discussed gaps and special issues warranting attention. Specific comments are provided below, followed by a short discussion of comments common to all watersheds.

### **General comments on 2007 watershed work program updates**

Although the watershed 2007 work program updates reflect advancement in terms of project identification, many of the watersheds continue to have gaps, to varying degrees, that were identified in the 2006 work program review. Regional assistance to the watershed planning teams will be needed to address how best to fill the needs identified below.

*Work Plan Accomplishments, Sequencing and Prioritization:* Work program updates are a useful tool for defining progress toward plan goals and ESU-wide recovery. Narratives should be crafted to give a sharper focus on what each watershed expects to accomplish within the three-year period and identifying alternatives if they are unable to implement a given suite of actions. All work program updates could be strengthened by providing more focus on how

projects and actions are prioritized and sequenced. It is also important that the narrative provide sufficient information to enable watershed teams and regional reviewers to determine whether the pace of implementation is appropriate to achieve each watershed's ten- year goals.

*Integrated Management of Habitat, Harvest and Hatcheries:* All Puget Sound watersheds' work programs would benefit from additional efforts to achieve H-Integration. During 2006, all watersheds with Chinook populations have engaged in actions that reflect increased attention to the integrated management of habitat, harvest and hatchery. By the end of 2008, it is anticipated that those watersheds will have completed or substantially advanced efforts to accomplish the 6 Step process developed at the regional level by the H-Integration sub-group of the Adaptive Management and Monitoring Steering Committee. The Shared Strategy and TRT liaisons will continue to assist watersheds without independent Chinook populations concerning integrated management and the capacity of the nearshore to sustain natural- and hatchery-origin populations of all salmonids.

*Monitoring and Adaptive Management:* A regional monitoring and adaptive management plan is currently being drafted by Shared Strategy staff along with a work group of technical experts, which will guide monitoring efforts at the regional and fish population scales. Some watersheds have already begun putting together their own monitoring and adaptive management frameworks and initial monitoring tasks. The regional team will coordinate with those watersheds to ensure that both of the monitoring and adaptive management plans are consistent and complementary with each other. During the intervening time, the Shared Strategy staff, work group and TRT acknowledge that they play an important role in providing assistance during the coming year to ensure that all Puget Sound watersheds can engage in a coordinated and efficient process to develop, refine and implement a robust monitoring and adaptive management approach. This will enable watersheds and the region to assess progress in reducing uncertainties in the population and ESU-wide recovery. Shared Strategy anticipates that the regional plan will be adopted by the Recovery Council by the end of 2007. In the meantime, the Puget Sound TRT and Shared Strategy liaisons will assist watersheds who are poised to take the next steps in the development of their watershed monitoring and adaptive management plans.

*Protecting and restoring ecosystem processes for Chinook and other species by preserving options and addressing threats* are critical components of recovery planning both at the local and regional scale. Recovery actions have progressed from relatively straightforward work to complex and more expensive multi-year projects. All watersheds are challenged in terms of their capacity to acquire land in order to secure future options, and to implement the large-scale projects. The Shared Strategy staff and work group members acknowledge that additional efforts are needed at the regional scale to assist in securing resources that will enable watersheds to protect restoration options in rapidly developing areas and to implement projects at an appropriate pace to achieve ESU-wide recovery.

*Water quality and Water Quantity:* Water quality and water quantity will continue to be important issues for the long-term recovery of all populations within the ESU.

Work on water quality issues is within the authority of the Washington State Department of Ecology and will be primarily pursued through its implementation of the NPDES permit program

and the establishment of TMDLs under the Clean Water Act throughout the ESU. However, watersheds can play an important role in ensuring that local jurisdictions implementing NPDES permits adopt water quality programs that include actions and regulations that protect and enhance water quality in rivers and streams that are critical for salmon recovery.

At the regional level, a work group has been established on instream flows to determine how to move forward the protection strategy identified in the Recovery plan. At present, the Plan calls for a 3-pronged approach to improving instream flows: (1) setting and/or revising instream flows under the authority of the Department of Ecology; (2) improving our scientific understanding of fish population needs in relation to instream flows, groundwater dynamics and relationship to surface water, as well as the implications of climate change on instream flows over time; and (3) coordinating water management decisions and actions within each watershed to avoid further degradation of instream flow conditions through the creation of Protection and Enhancement Programs (PEPs). Watersheds will play an important role in moving these issues forward in the near term. Each watershed should consider (1) advocating for appropriate instream flow rules in places where they are needed; (2) participating in the development of new science by sending technical staff to instream flow workshops planned in 2007; and (3) working with the Department of Ecology to begin creating PEPs in areas where instream flows hinder the recovery of fish populations. The TRT and Shared Strategy liaisons will assist watersheds in advancing water quantity and water quality actions.

### **Comments Specific to West Sound Work Program Update:**

#### **Significant Advancements:**

- The work program is specific and addresses critical components of the recovery plan.
- The work plan shows significant advancement in nearshore assessment work and in the establishment and development of the West Sound Watershed Council. These two components of the work plan were identified in previous reviews as important areas for advancement.
- Several of the projects identified in the work program are direct outcomes of the nearshore assessment completed on Bainbridge Island and reflects advancement in the decision-making process for identifying and prioritizing projects.
- The work program describes how projects are prioritized and takes into account both the sequence needs of completing key projects and working within existing capacity.

#### **Issues Needing Advancement:**

- Continue to strengthen coordination across the jurisdictions and partners within the West Sound Watershed group to prioritize projects and adaptively manage the implementation of the recovery plan.
- Engage West Sound Watershed partners in decisions on water quality, stormwater, and protection. These issues are timely and important to advance in light of the current and projected increase in population across Kitsap County.
- Continue to progress on the nearshore assessment across the watershed.
- As acknowledged in the work plan update, advancement is needed in adaptive management and in integration of harvest, habitat, and hatcheries.