Sound Health, Sound Future

Protecting and Restoring Puget Sound

Puget Sound Partnership Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

December, 2006

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Puget Sound Partnership
www.pugetsoundpartnership.org

PUGET SOUND PARTNERSHIP

December 2006

Dear Governor Gregoire,

The Puget Sound Partnership reached consensus on and is pleased to submit our final recommendations in response to your charge that we *"develop recommendations for preserving the health and ecosystem of Puget Sound, and to help educate and enlist the public in achieving recovery of the Sound by 2020."* We believe our work lays a new foundation for a healthy Puget Sound.

Puget Sound protection and restoration is a complex, long-term endeavor. It will require a new, holistic way of interacting with and managing the magnificent resources that we cherish and need for our prosperity and well-being. In response to your specific charges, we recommend:

- **A complete 2020 Action Agenda that links actions to results across the region.** While much of this work should continue, our essential priorities show what is needed for a healthy Puget Sound by 2020, and our immediate actions show where progress should be accelerated right now. As requested, we have identified five areas in need of immediate State attention and leadership: cleanup areas with immediate septic problems; protect Puget Sound habitat; implement priority projects to restore our damaged forests, rivers, shorelines, and marine waters; accelerate control and cleanup of pervasive toxic pollution; and significantly reduce polluted runoff.
- **A long-term approach to both raise public awareness and build on a regional tradition of community action and involvement.** This includes a multi-year public awareness campaign and support for new education and engagement efforts that build on and tie into existing efforts, as well as strengthen education programs and efforts to recruit, train, and engage citizen volunteers.
- **A new governance structure that provides visible, trusted leadership across the region, and is accountable for results.** While our current system results in positive actions, we lack accountability for action and results needed to have a healthy Puget Sound by 2020, the capacity to resolve conflicts and conflicting mandates, and the ability to use scarce resources efficiently. We recommend a new leadership council and implementation board of affected parties to be the center of this new approach.
- **Significant increases in funding from all levels of government, as well as private sources, foundations, and non-traditional means.** This will enable both the recommended new governance entity and each of the sectors to step up and meet the challenges. While our recommendation of an adaptive management approach will improve the effectiveness of current expenditures, substantial additional resources

will be needed. A major increase in funding from the State in the 2007-09 biennium budget will help accelerate progress immediately. This investment by the State would stimulate additional contributions from other levels of government.

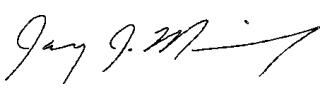
The Partnership strongly believes that the State's investment, which is already significant, will need to be augmented by a long-term, dedicated revenue source of substantial magnitude to meet the doubled or tripled investment needed. This revenue source should be identified as soon as is feasible. Local government contributions to the Sound's recovery have been and will continue to be considerable and the action called for by the Partnership will require further effort on their parts. Cities and counties will need flexibility and creativity in implementing their responsibilities under the Plan, and to raise their share of revenue. The federal share should be significantly increased, consistent with the Sound's environmental and economic importance. Private interests will continue to have responsibilities to meet the requirements of existing laws for pollution control and cleanup, and will be an essential partner in developing and implementing innovative approaches to address remaining and emerging threats.

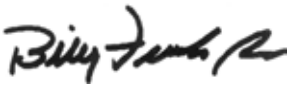
- **A Clear Role and Structure for Scientific Input.** The new governance structure would have a science advisory committee that is also connected to the Washington State Academy of Science. This will allow for coordinated scientific input as well as collaboration between scientists and policy leaders.

Urgent and broad-scale actions are needed now and into the future if we are to leave a legacy of a healthy Puget Sound for future generations. The Partnership has been moved and impressed by the publicly-voiced deeply held passion and commitment for Puget Sound. This past year has sparked hope and lively discourse about what actions will really make a difference. We believe that these discussions must continue so that we learn to act as region.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to serve the State of Washington in creating a positive lasting legacy in Puget Sound. We are ready to implement our recommendations and to continue to serve you.

Yours truly,





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Partnership Thanks and Acknowledgements

The Partnership would like to thank and acknowledge the many individuals, organizations, and agencies whose hard work on this project is greatly appreciated. Their dedication and passion to finding lasting solutions to protect and restore Puget Sound made these recommendations possible.

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Executive Summary

PHOTOS: UPPER: DAN KOWALSKI, LOWER: WELDON WILSON

A Sound Body

Puget Sound is a vast and beautiful estuary — one of the largest in the United States. Waters rush down from the mountains through fertile valleys and mix with shifting tides and currents in the sparkling saltwater basin. Puget Sound is also a complex living ecosystem — the collective body of plants and animals that interact with each other and their surroundings.

Not unlike our own human bodies, the living systems of Puget Sound are dynamic, in a constant state of change. The perpetual movement of water, soil, plants, and animals between the land and the sea make Puget Sound productive and healthy. When all of our body's systems are fully functional, we don't have to think too much about our health. As things change and systems become stressed, health care becomes increasingly important.

On the surface, Puget Sound still looks terrific; yet underneath there are alarming signals that the ecosystem is in trouble. Although our scientific "doctors" tell us that Puget Sound, as a whole, is still in fair condition, they also point out ominous indicators that we must take action now to prevent irreversible decline. Symptoms include the decline of some of our most revered species such as salmon and orcas. The conversion of forest lands to cityscapes has displaced many birds and mammals, and altered the flow of rivers and streams. These changes flow from land to sea, carrying polluted runoff from human development. Closures of beaches and shellfish harvest due to the risk of disease have become more frequent, and more widespread. In places such as Hood Canal, the Sound's circulatory system is failing in its ability to maintain sufficient oxygen levels, leading to devastating fish kills and the death of other marine life. If left unchecked, these conditions will increase in frequency and may spread to other areas of Puget Sound. Poisonous substances are entering the lands and waters around the Sound — such as petroleum residues, flame retardants, fertilizers, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals. These substances can be particularly toxic after decades of buildup and they move through the food web where they end up in plants, animals, and people.

Like our bodies, natural systems have a remarkable capacity for healing. However, with the significant level of harm to the ecosystem, we are now exceeding Puget Sound's recuperative powers. **We share this region with thousands of other plant and animal species that depend on each other for their continued existence. Taking effective action now will determine whether there will be a legacy for future generations to cherish in Puget Sound.**

PHOTOS: LEFT TO RIGHT: SHARED STRATEGY FOR PUGET SOUND, SNOHOMISH COUNTY, DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

Vision for a Healthy Sound

In December 2005, Governor Gregoire outlined an ambitious vision for Puget Sound. She appointed 21 leaders, including representatives from building and timber industries, shellfish growers, agriculture and environmental interests, port authorities, and local, state, federal, and tribal governments to the Puget Sound Partnership. The Partnership was given a 10-month assignment to *"develop recommendations for preserving the health and ecosystem of Puget Sound, and to help educate and enlist the public in achieving recovery of the Sound by 2020."*

"To ensure that the Puget Sound forever will be a thriving natural system, with clean marine and freshwaters, healthy and abundant native species, natural shorelines and places for public enjoyment, and a vibrant economy that prospers in productive harmony with a healthy Sound."

The Governor's Vision,
from the Charge to the Partnership

What is a healthy Puget Sound ecosystem? In developing goals for the Puget Sound, the Partnership recognized that human well-being and natural systems are intimately connected. A healthy ecosystem means that fish and shellfish are plentiful and safe to eat, air is healthy to breathe, and water and beaches are clean for swimming and fishing. Well-being means that people are able to use and enjoy the lands and waters of the Puget Sound region, tribal cultures are sustained, natural resource-dependent industries such as agriculture, tourism, and fisheries thrive, and the region is economically prosperous. In a healthy ecosystem, the rich diversity of species flourish and are supported by plentiful, productive habitat, as well as clean and abundant water.

The dazzling appearance of Puget Sound is deceiving; the numbers of salmon, orcas, and many other creatures are at a fraction of historic levels and tell us that our ecosystem is in trouble. The essential natural processes that support the wealth of species in Puget Sound have been disrupted through our actions. The many creatures that share this ecosystem depend on a complex food web and plentiful, healthy habitats ranging from rich upland forests to spawning grounds and eelgrass beds. Population growth and climate change are likely to erode ecosystem health even further unless bold, comprehensive action to protect Puget Sound is taken now.

The Governor's Charges to the Puget Sound Partnership:

- **2020 Action Agenda:** Develop recommendations for the Legislature, Congress, and [the Governor] to preserve the environmental health, goods and services needed by the year 2020 to ensure that the Puget Sound's marine and freshwaters will be able to support healthy populations of the native species, as well as water quality and quantity to support both human needs and ecosystem functions.
- **Public Engagement and Communications:** Engage citizens, watershed groups, businesses, the environmental community, and tribal, local, state, and federal governments, in a broad public education effort and enlist their help in developing the recommendations.
- **Governance Structure:** Recommend a structure for an on-going public-private partnership to steward the ecosystem back to health and protect it over the long-term.
- **Funding:** Review current and potential funding sources to provide for the protection and restoration of this ecosystem and, where possible, recommend the priority of expenditures to achieve the desired 2020 outcome.
- **Science:** Develop recommendations regarding how to integrate, simplify and better organize and involve the numerous scientific efforts and organizations focused on Puget Sound to inform our policies and assist in setting and meeting our goals.

PHOTOS: TOP TO BOTTOM: ERIC MARK ANDERSON, PUGET SOUND ACTION TEAM, RANDY SHUMAN; RIGHT: NORTHWEST INDIAN FISHERIES COMMISSION

We must change the way we interact with our environment in order to preserve it. Getting to our vision for the future will be a long journey for us and all who come after we are gone.

Bill Ruckelshaus, Co-Chair
Puget Sound Partnership

Despite our challenges, we still have a wealth of human and natural assets for restoring our rivers, streams and marine waters. Although some parts of the Puget Sound ecosystem will never be as robust as they were 200 years ago, our scientists report that other parts of Puget Sound remain strong. We still have rivers that support significant salmon runs, shorelines and bays where herring spawn, and commercially prosperous oyster and clam beaches. However, with the downward trends in ecosystem health and predicted increase in human population, time is running out to protect and restore many features that support a host of species, provide clean water, and enrich our quality of life. The highly committed people and communities, businesses, environmental organizations, and governments at every level working hard in our watersheds and marine areas represent an abundance of talent that should be supported to achieve tangible results. **We must protect and build upon our natural assets and human resources, and weave these together in an effort that is both collaborative and accountable. Efforts must also be immediately increased. It is only through such an approach that people and the natural environment will thrive.**

A Holistic Approach is Needed to Rebuild a Thriving Puget Sound Ecosystem

Over the past year, the Puget Sound Partnership has learned more about this magnificent ecosystem, the challenges we face now and in the future, and the deeply held passion and commitment for

PHOTO: NOAA

Lessons learned from other places point to a need for a system-wide perspective for restoring ecosystem health.
Critical elements for success include:

- Setting priorities for action and measuring results
- Assigning responsibilities for action and holding the parties to their commitments
- Having the ability to make binding decisions that are clear to those affected by them
- Tracking and reporting on the effort, and accounting for results

Puget Sound by the people who call this place home. The Partnership has also explored the lessons learned from other regions of the country that have faced large-scale ecosystem challenges. One of these findings is that ecosystem health is not attainable without a system-wide perspective when setting priorities and taking action. **Few regions of the world have attempted to put this holistic perspective into action, but we believe that our rich natural legacy and history of collaboration give us the possibility to succeed.**

While much remains to be learned about the complexity of the Puget Sound ecosystem, in less than 10 months, the Partnership made important progress on a new foundation for Sound-wide recovery by 2020. Building on consensus about the problems facing Puget Sound, the Partnership's recommendations are organized around the five connected charges presented by the Governor - a comprehensive approach to action; creating a community that understands, supports, and takes action; managing the effort for results and accountability; and having a long-term sustained source of funding. The following sections summarize the Partnership's response to the charges. Details on the Partnership's recommendations can be found in the complete report.

Essential Priorities for a Healthy Puget Sound by 2020

Our past approach to environmental issues in the region has commonly consisted of a series of single-focus efforts, each concentrated on a particular species or cause of degradation. A system-wide approach that addresses all of the complex connections among our land, water, and web of species offers the best hope for achieving multiple and connected needs for people and natural systems in Puget Sound.

A comprehensive plan based on a scientific assessment of the entire ecosystem with responsibilities, benchmarks, and timelines is needed to ensure that actions taken achieve our vision of a healthy Sound. This effort would build from the existing Puget Sound plan that has been periodically updated since 1985 and integrate the many plans that already exist for specific species and locales. The Partnership recommends that this task be assigned immediately to a new Puget Sound Partnership (see governance recommendation). The governance and funding recommendations will help make sure the plan can be implemented and that there is accountability for results.

While a scientifically-based comprehensive action agenda is being created, the Partnership believes that existing efforts must be accelerated. **The set of priorities as a whole are essential to success as they support and complement each other in protecting and rebuilding the health of Puget Sound.**

Puget Sound is home — for us and all the salmon and animals and plants that live here. This is all about cleaning up our backyard. We can do it, but we've got to work together.

Billy Frank, Jr.,
Chair of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

Protect Puget Sound Habitat

Remaining habitat is disappearing, along with the plants and animals that need these specialized homes to survive. The

We can't turn back the clock on prior methods used to manage growth impacts in Puget Sound, but we can plan and build communities with more sensitivity to the needs of salmon, wildlife and natural functions. If we continue to apply what science tells us helps fix the problems created by past development practices and we commit the resources necessary to make change expeditiously, we can prevent further degradation and restore Puget Sound's fresh and marine waters.

Sam Anderson, Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties

pace of growth and corresponding changes to our forest and agricultural land base and our shorelands has far outstripped habitat protection and restoration efforts, and another 1.4 million people are expected to live here by 2020. Protecting enough high quality, diverse, and inter-connected habitats throughout our lands, river systems, and marine waters is essential to the recovery of the Puget Sound ecosystem. Protecting habitat will benefit human health and well-being by improving water quality and quantity, and it is a more certain and more cost effective strategy for ecosystem health than restoration.

A variety of actions must be used for habitat protection including timely and effective enforcement of habitat protection requirements, and there is broad support to improve compliance with existing laws. Additional strategies — including education to encourage individual stewardship, land use policies that direct growth toward urban areas, and maintaining rural areas for farming and forestry — will help protect and sustain upland and marine habitats.

Restore Damaged Forests, Rivers, Shorelines, and Marine Waters

Puget Sound has already lost an astonishing 80% of its estuary habitat, and at least one-third of shorelines have been armored with riprap, bulkheads or otherwise altered. Protection of remaining habitat alone will not be enough to attain ecosystem health; restoration of past damage in upland and marine areas is required. The past decade of effort in salmon recovery and marine restoration has demonstrated that we know how to restore and rehabilitate many damaged environments. We have opened barriers to fish migration, repaired marine shorelines, and re-created natural habitat conditions in our rivers. These experiences have shown that restoration actions are compatible with working lands and shorelines, and can provide opportunities for economic gain as well. However, we have only scratched the surface of what is needed — the pace and scale of restoration must be significantly increased for recovery. Restoration must work hand-in-hand with habitat protection to avoid the continuous and costly cycle of damage, repair, and cleanup.

Accelerate Control and Clean-up of Toxic Pollution

People, businesses, and industry have introduced chemicals into the environment — many of which are toxic to people, animals, and aquatic life. If not removed or otherwise controlled, some of these substances persist and recirculate through the Sound — building up to harmful levels as they move through the food web. Persistent toxic substances that were banned decades ago remain in sediments, particularly around urban bays. Stormwater runoff is a major route by which toxic substances continue to reach Puget Sound. Some of these chemicals accumulate in the environment and in human and animal tissue, presenting risk to people, fish, and wildlife. For example, in

PHOTOS: CLOCKWISE FROM LOWER LEFT: SNOHOMISH COUNTY, UNKNOWN, TOP - KING COUNTY, MIDDLE AND RIGHT - STOCK

Protecting and restoring upland and marine habitat, as well improving water quality are essential for the marine mammals, fish, birds, shellfish, as well as human health and well-being.

October, 2006, the Department of Health issued a fish consumption advisory for Puget Sound Chinook, rockfish, and flatfish due to concerns about PCBs and mercury.

Improving water quality and cleaning up contaminated sediments are among the top priorities for improving the health of marine mammals, fish, birds, shellfish, and their food webs, as well as human health and well-being. Reducing sources of toxics is a more certain and sustainable solution than cleaning up the water and sediments after they become contaminated. Accelerating control and cleanup of pervasive toxic pollution will require actions by individual people and businesses, as well as governments.

Significantly Reduce Pollution from Human and Animal Wastes and Other Sources

Human and animal waste contains high levels of nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorous and harmful bacteria and viruses that are called pathogens. Excessive nutrients and pathogens from sewage, inadequate septic systems, farm runoff, and other human activities have created low oxygen problems, and contribute to the spread of bacteria and viruses. These pollutants contaminate water supplies, cause fish kills, and have increased shellfish area closures and outbreaks of disease among humans. Eliminating or reducing sources of excess nutrients and pathogens in the Puget Sound will remove an important threat to water quality and human health in the region. As with

Shellfish is a significant food source and a large economic contributor in our region. Keeping the beaches and waters of Puget Sound clean is critical to the survival of this industry and our way of life.

Bill Taylor, Taylor Shellfish Farms

PHOTOS: CLOCKWISE FROM LOWER LEFT: TAYLOR SHELLFISH FARMS, PUGET SOUND ACTION TEAM, BRUCE WULKAN-PUGET SOUND ACTION TEAM

habitat protection, preventing pollution is a more certain, sustainable, and cost effective solution than cleaning up problems after they occur, and can be accomplished through septic system upgrades, wastewater treatment, stormwater controls, and the control of fertilizers and other contaminants.

Significantly Reduce Polluted Stormwater Runoff

Stormwater runoff is an important pathway for many toxic substances and other pollution to reach fresh and marine waters. Sudden increases in stream flow that occur during high rainfall can be greatly exacerbated by urbanization that replaces natural vegetation with pavement or rooftops. This water surge can damage habitat in streams and wetlands. Managing stormwater runoff is essential for clean water, as well as protecting habitat and our supply of water. Stormwater runoff from new and existing roads and developed areas must be managed to maximize the amount of water that soaks into the ground. Many of the region's cities and urban areas were built before stormwater was controlled or treated, and extensive retrofitting and treatment of water running off city streets will be needed, especially in priority areas. New development will need to be located and built to minimize impacts and comply with existing laws.

Ensure Adequate Water for People, Fish and Wildlife, and the Environment

The water running in our rivers and streams may seem plentiful, but current and projected uses indicate that demand for adequate water to support fish populations and community

growth will be difficult to accommodate. Rivers and streams must have enough water to support increased runs of salmon and the needs of other species, including those in marine areas. Low streamflows and stormwater surges already impact many rivers and streams in the Puget Sound region. Flows may need to be augmented where they are insufficient. Water conservation, water reuse, and preparation for climate change will be essential.

Protect Ecosystem Biodiversity and Recover Imperiled Species

As of 2006, more than 40 species in the region are on the federal and Washington State lists of threatened, endangered, or candidate species that need special protection. Two species that reflect the core identity of Puget Sound are in trouble. Chinook salmon are listed as a *threatened* species with runs generally below 10% of their historic estimates, and resident killer whales are listed as *endangered* — meaning that they are at a critical threshold that can lead to extinction if significant gains are not made. Other species of fish, marine mammals, birds, and wildlife are also declining in the region, some with dramatic drops in recent decades.

The primary threats to species and biodiversity are loss and degradation of habitat quality and quantity, water quantity and quality changes, over-harvest, disease, and competition or predation from non-native species. Addressing the threats is fundamental for sustaining or recovering imperiled species, and ensuring a resilient and diverse ecosystem. In addition to the essential priorities for habitat and pollution reduction identified by the Partnership, species recovery will necessitate continued imple-

PHOTOS: CLOCKWISE FROM LOWER LEFT: SHARED STRATEGY FOR PUGET SOUND, NICK BROWN, TOP AND BOTTOM PHOTOS -SHARED STRATEGY FOR PUGET SOUND, SEADOC SOCIETY, FRIENDS OF THE SAN JUANS, SHARED STRATEGY FOR PUGET SOUND

I worry about orcas, salmon, eelgrass and habitat because it's the legacy for our children — if we wait to do something, the chance will be gone.

Washington State Representative Sherry Appleton

mentation of changes in harvest practices and taking care that recreational activities such as whale watching do not disturb sensitive species.

Build and Support our Human Capacity to Protect and Sustain the Environment

The history of collaboration in natural resources in Washington is nationally known, but our region needs to expand and support the culture of stewardship among all residents. Community volunteer groups, watershed councils, and marine resource committees need to be fostered and encouraged, and provided with the ability to complete on-the-ground projects. Local, state, and tribal governments will need technical support and funding to carry out programs, assist landowners and builders to understand environmental needs and work cooperatively to find solutions, and enforce regulations. Expanded use of incentives can point the way to creative solutions to protect and restore the Puget Sound basin.

Over the past 10 months, the Partnership's work stimulated significant discussion about what actions will best protect and restore the Sound. This discussion has underscored the need for a continuing rigorous scientific and policy analysis to prioritize and build common understanding about the work needed. The Partnership's draft recommendations that were widely circulated in October generated more than 450 pages of comment from over 260 respondents, and over 70 people spoke at three public meetings. While many reviewers submitted detailed comments that could not be fully addressed at this stage of deliberation, the Partnership's final recommendations were influenced by public comment, particularly for stormwater runoff, toxics, and governance. Public comment also provided more specificity to the actions proposed and helped correct factual misstatements. All comments are posted on the Partnership website. The Partnership encourages the Governor and the Legislature to consult and use the comments as they make specific funding decisions for 2007-09 biennium. The recommended new governance entity should continue the public conversation and use the comments when developing a complete action agenda for 2020.

PHOTOS: TOP: SHARED STRATEGY FOR PUGET SOUND, BOTTOM: TERRY HULL-PUGET SOUND ACTION TEAM

Educating and Engaging the Public about the Protection and Care of Puget Sound

Public awareness and understanding of the health of Puget Sound is vital for expanding the corps of knowledgeable, engaged citizens who support protecting and restoring Puget Sound

and are already working in their watersheds and marine areas. Public opinion polling shows that the people who live here place a very high value on Puget Sound. People think of Puget Sound as "where we live" and have strong personal connections to the area. People also believe that it is important to protect Puget Sound for future generations, to provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and because it is good for the economy. These findings provide hope that with true understanding of the threats facing Puget Sound, the long-term public support needed for protection and restoration will be deep and strong.

We have to build from the passion that people have for their corner of Puget Sound.

Jay Manning, Director, Washington Department of Ecology

However, the majority of residents are not greatly aware of the problems facing the Puget Sound region. They generally see the health of the region as pretty good or excellent. This implies there is a great deal of work to do to inform the public on the problems facing the Sound to garner their support and action. The majority of people agreed that "top leaders from all segments of society working as a team" should lead the effort to improve the health of Puget Sound. **Increased public awareness of Puget Sound conditions is essential to support the personal and public policy actions needed to restore the Sound's health.**

The Partnership provides three recommendations to build and sustain long-term public awareness and engagement that will close the gap between public perception and reality.

1. Initiate the first phase of a multi-year public awareness campaign. The campaign will be designed to build awareness about the problems, explain how people can change their behavior as individuals and society, and show how citizens can engage with their neighbors, community, and political leaders to support and protect Puget Sound.

2. Support new education and engagement efforts that build on and tie into existing efforts, as well as strengthen K-12 and other education programs for youth and adults. In addition, enhance programs to recruit, train, and engage citizens as volunteers. All education and engagement efforts should be explicitly tied to the achievement of the 2020 Action Agenda. This means:

    - Prioritizing the expansion and sustenance of effective existing programs and organizations, and funding educational and volunteer programs that explicitly link to the 2020 Action Agenda — such as restoration and stewardship projects, monitoring and data-gathering, and education on septic systems, toxic products, and other opportunities to influence individuals' decisions.

    - Supporting partnerships that include the universities to provide technical support for locally-based education, protection and restoration efforts that improve Puget Sound's health; to monitor and evaluate public impacts and program effectiveness; and to build, train, and support a volunteer network of Puget Sound stewards and educators.

    - Creating a clearinghouse and network of organizations providing Puget Sound education programs.

- Supporting tribes' efforts to educate and involve tribal members and the broader community.
- Supporting a Puget Sound "literacy" program.
- Providing the resources for watershed and marine resource groups to engage citizens in education and volunteer efforts to implement priority projects and actions, including monitoring, data-gathering, and stewardship.

3. Improve education and volunteer involvement programs over time by setting and tracking goals for public awareness and understanding of Puget Sound conditions, threats, and progress.

Public opinion polling has shown that 97% of the residents of Puget Sound believe that: "A healthy Puget Sound is a legacy that we must leave to our children and grandchildren."

A New Puget Sound Partnership for Action and Accountability

The current system of governance for the protection and restoration of Puget Sound is highly fragmented. Twelve counties, more than a hundred cities, 17 tribes, numerous state and federal agencies, as well as hundreds of special purpose governmental units, are responsible for managing land use and other actions that can benefit or diminish the quality of the environment. Private organizations, businesses, and citizens are also taking actions that both benefit and harm the rich natural resources of the region. There are no overarching goals or priorities for the ecosystem, nor is there a place to resolve conflicting mandates within or across governments. The current system lacks accountability for the actions and results needed to achieve a healthy Puget Sound.

The Partnership recommends that a new entity, also known as the Puget Sound Partnership, be created to lead the effort to protect and restore Puget Sound. The intent is to establish a governance structure with an ecosystem-based, accountable, and collaborative approach. This true partnership would involve all the diverse groups across the Puget Sound region, both public and private. Leadership, responsibility for results, and accessibility to the public are key functions for a new governance structure. A Leadership Council would be appointed by the Governor to develop an ecosystem-wide plan, resolve disputes, oversee the efficiency and effectiveness of money spent, determine accountability for performance, and track and report results to the Governor, legislature, and the public. **The Partnership's recommendations would not change existing authorities of cities, counties, tribes, or State or federal agencies (with the exception of the Puget Sound Action Team) for implementation of environmental statutes, nor create another layer of government in Puget Sound.** It is essential to build upon the extensive previous and ongoing local and regional

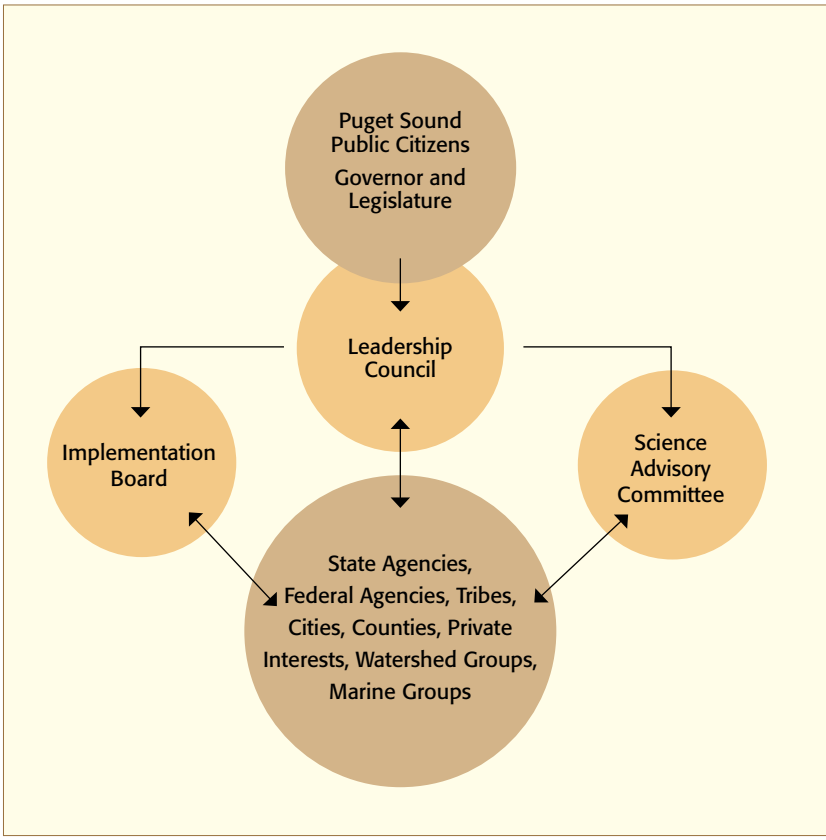
efforts that have been undertaken by our communities and organizations in Puget Sound, and replicate their successes on a Sound-wide basis.

The recommended structure would combine and expand the functions of the Puget Sound Action Team and the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound into a new entity, and continue the work of groups like the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council, the Northwest Straits Initiative, and local watershed groups. Incorporation of scientific input would be a major facet of the new structure, supporting science-based efforts such as the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program and the Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership.

Legislative action and funding would be needed to support the new Puget Sound Partnership and staff. The 5-7 member Leadership Council would be vested with the authority to ensure action and results at the state level. The Implementation Board would be a public-private partnership, composed of members who guide on-the-ground action, including representatives from local governments, State and federal agencies, tribes, private businesses, environmental organizations, and others. This approach to using a team of leaders from private and public sectors was broadly supported in the public research polling as the best way to provide public confidence and objective reporting on the overall efforts to protect and restore Puget Sound.

This is an opportunity to move governance forward — not only in a way that makes Puget Sound a better place to live, but a more competitive part of the world as well.

Washington State Representative Fred Jarrett



It is critical that we initiate the transition to a new governance structure in a manner that continues the Partnership's work and momentum while the new organization gets up and running. The new Partnership must promptly complete the 2020 Action Agenda that will be the plan to guide us to a healthy Puget Sound. It should also engage a team of scientists to help develop the plan by conducting a systematic review of the threats facing Puget Sound, and strategies proposed by the Leadership Council. The new governance structure should also:

- Support watershed-level and marine resource groups that the Partnership believes are critical for problem identification, strategy development, and for achieving on-the-

PHOTOS: LEFT-DAN KOWALSKI, RIGHT-SNOHOMISH COUNTY

ground results. Support is needed for coordinating the actions of the existing groups in each area for water quality, water quantity, and habitat protection and restoration.

- Enhance capacity for monitoring and assessment, protection and recovery actions, enforcement, and continued education. Local and tribal governments and other interested parties will also need support in order to participate in collaborative processes at the ecosystem level.
- Monitor and assess our actions so that we will know if we are achieving desired results, determine what is working, and adjust actions accordingly. A central structure to collate and analyze information across the ecosystem and prioritize additional information deficiencies is needed, and should be coordinated with the recommendations of the Governor's Monitoring Forum. This monitoring information should be publicly available and is an important component of the public outreach efforts previously described.
- Regularly analyze and evaluate the overall management system and recommend improvement where necessary.
- Annually report to the Governor, legislature, and the public, starting in 2008, on progress toward Puget Sound recovery, including recovery goals and funding efforts.

Funding to Protect, Restore, and Manage Puget Sound

Puget Sound's natural assets are important to the State's economy. The recreational fishery in Puget Sound is valued conservatively at $10 million annually. The commercial value of shellfish production is over $59 million annually; the recreational value of shellfish is conservatively

estimated to be $19.2 million annually. The Puget Sound region provides $5.2 billion in tourism revenue. Nearly 400,000 people participate in recreational activities in the water or on the beaches of Puget Sound at least once a year.

All levels of governments and the private sector are already investing large amounts of money into the effort to protect and restore Puget Sound, and this investment has been effective in treating wastewater, cleaning up contaminated sites, and restoring habitat. Nevertheless, the indicators of decline in our ecosystem point out that additional investment is needed to achieve the 2020 vision. The Partnership has looked at how much money is being spent currently, what this investment has achieved in terms of ecosystem protection, and what it might cost to attain ecosystem health. By extrapolating current spending from federal, state, and county governments, the Partnership determined that the region is likely to spend nearly $9 billion on Sound-wide protection and restoration between now and 2020. While existing resources can and will need to be used more effectively through an adaptive management approach, the Partnership believes that restoration will also require significant additional investment. Based on the estimates of current unmet needs, achieving a healthy Puget Sound will require a doubling or tripling of current expenditures.

PHOTO: SNOHOMISH COUNTY

The Partnership recommends a significant increase in funding from the State in the 2007-9 biennium budget to accelerate progress immediately. This investment by the State would stimulate additional contributions from other levels of government.

The Partnership strongly believes that the State's investment, which is already significant, will need to be augmented by a long-term, broad-based dedicated revenue source of substantial magnitude. This revenue source should be identified as soon as feasible. Local government contributions to the Sound's recovery have been and will continue to be considerable, and the action called for by the Partnership will require further effort on their parts. Cities and counties will need flexibility and creativity in implementing their responsibilities under the Plan, and to raise their share of rev-

Saving the Sound will require a massive effort by all levels of government and the private sector working hand in hand. We must have a clear action plan and a dedicated long-term funding source to support it. I pledge to work in Congress to bring significant funds from the federal government and to help make Puget Sound a national priority.

Congressman Norm Dicks

enue. The federal share should be significantly increased consistent with the Sound's environmental and economic importance. Private interests will continue to have responsibilities to meet the requirements of existing laws for pollution control and cleanup, and will be an essential partner in developing and implementing innovative approaches to address threats.

Involving Science to Support Planning, Goals, and Actions

In the same way that medical science has developed powerful tools to detect, understand, diagnose, treat, and often improve the condition of the systems upon which a healthy body depends, we rely on scientists to inform the work toward the vision of a healthy ecosystem. Scientific advisors are considered an integral part of an effective governance structure. A full assessment of problems and trends on an ecosystem level will be needed as the new Puget Sound Partnership develops a complete ecosystem plan. Finally, scientists will assist by providing a clear set of measures and benchmarks to assess our progress.

The Partnership has accomplished something incredibly important – we've learned lessons from the past and added new urgency. I look forward to turning that urgency into action.

Kathy Fletcher, People For Puget Sound

Transition and Assignment to a New Puget Sound Partnership

The Partnership has identified a number of immediate actions that should be taken to protect and restore Puget Sound, along with recommendations to set up a long-term structure to manage our ecosystem in an accountable and collaborative way. Although the existing Partnership's task is fulfilled with the completion of this report, several assignments remain for the new Puget Sound Partnership. A new structure should be established as soon as possible to complete a long term action plan, review public input, and garner funding support. Finally, it will fall to the new governance entity for Puget Sound to produce tangible, visible, and meaningful results that will inspire support and action by the public. Our region has rallied to face environmental challenges for decades, and our ability to carry that effort to an ecosystem level is not only possible, but will increase our prosperity for generations.

PHOTO: SNOHOMISH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS-SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Immediate Action Recommendations for Governor Gregoire

The Governor requested five actions where state leadership and significant funding will demonstrate a serious commitment for a sustained, vibrant ecosystem that supports communities and our rich natural resources. The following actions will accelerate tangible, visible, and meaningful progress on the ground, and should also attract additional support from federal, tribal, and local governments, as well as the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Cleanup Areas with Immediate Septic Problems

1. **In addition to fully implementing the 2006 legislation to address septic systems in sensitive marine areas, further upgrade inadequate and failing systems:**
   - Partner with the private sector to provide truly affordable and effective financial assistance to homeowners for septic system repairs to address pathogen pollution, nutrient removing technology upgrades, and/or replacement. This would begin with a pilot program in Mason, Kitsap, and Jefferson counties;
   - Provide financial assistance to local governments to fully implement improvements to septic system management programs through monitoring, education, technical assistance, and where necessary, enforcement;
   - Clarify and strengthen state, on-reservation tribal and local oversight of septic system management and the authority, including enforcement to better control environmental impacts. Strengthen authorization to access private property to determine the need for monitoring and repair in circumstances where the risk to the health of Puget Sound is acute. Accelerate preparation of water quality cleanup plans for shellfish protection districts, along with expanded responsibility to address both bacterial and nitrogen pollution.

2. **Rigorously assess the amounts and sources of pollutants from septic systems, sewage treatment plants, and other sources so that actions for cleanup and prevention can be prioritized.**

Protect Puget Sound Habitat

1. **Substantially increase compliance with our existing laws that protect habitat, water quality, and stream flows. Significant funding to enhance and move compliance efforts forward is needed for State agencies and local governments, and would be used to:**
   - Put people on the ground in local communities and watersheds so that voluntary compliance with existing laws increases. Where necessary, undertake timely and effective action to enforce environmental protection standards.
   - Accelerate the completion and implementation of updates to local Shoreline Master Programs and Critical Area Ordinances. The state should provide clear and consistent technical support so that policies and regulations are effective.
   - Increase partnerships with farmers, forest owners, developers, and other landowners through incentives and technical assistance.
   - Increase public awareness of and support for habitat protection by engaging landowners with scientists and resource managers to identify current deficiencies, and to jointly develop improvements to regulations, incentives, and education programs.

2. **Acquire land from willing sellers in watersheds and estuaries and along marine shorelines to protect important habitats that support salmon and other marine, freshwater, and upland species of concern.**

Implement Priority Projects to Restore Damaged Forests, Rivers, Shorelines, and Marine Waters

Significant funding is needed to implement the highest priority projects that are ready to proceed as identified in salmon recovery plans, other species recovery plans, nearshore evaluation programs, and other programs.

Accelerate Control and Cleanup of Toxic Pollution

1. Accelerate the cleanup of in-water sites and upland sites within one-half mile of Puget Sound. The first priority for the use of Model Toxics Control Account funds should be to complete the cleanup of these sites in a timely and protective manner.
2. Prevent catastrophic oil spills by stationing a year-round tug at Neah Bay.
3. Implement a comprehensive strategy to prevent, reduce, and control the release of toxics into the environment. This will include providing safe alternatives, improved treatment, and chemical use reduction and phase out. This recommendation includes support of the phase-out of PBDEs (flame retardants that bio-accumulate), provided there are safe alternatives that meet applicable fire safety standards.
4. Provide financial assistance for water reuse projects to reduce demand on potable water supply, to help control toxic, nutrient, and pathogen discharges and to help keep water in rivers and streams.
5. Rigorously assess the amounts and sources of toxic pollution from water and air entering Puget Sound so that prevention and cleanup actions can be prioritized to address critical problems.

Significantly Reduce Polluted Stormwater Runoff

1. Issue National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase I and Phase II municipal stormwater permits in December 2006 to bring 80% (and some 76 cities) of the Puget Sound's population into active stormwater management.

While the state already plans to issue the permits, support for the following additional actions will complement the permits, and will help local governments comply with permit requirements:

- Fund a coordinated water quality monitoring program between State, federal, and local governments and the private sector to determine whether results are being achieved.
- Promote and expand programs that maximize stormwater infiltration so that we meet water quality standards and goals. This package should include incentives, technical guidance, education and awareness for residents and decision-makers, regulatory changes, and funding. For example, provide technical and financial incentives to local governments to use stormwater standards that are upgraded from the Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual.
- Sponsor pilot projects supported by the Department of Transportation and Department of Ecology for a basin approach to stormwater management.
- Fund high-profile, low impact development projects and provide grants to local governments to help develop and promote low impact development.

2. Identify and implement priority stormwater retrofits in urban areas where stormwater runoff is causing significant environmental harm.
3. Immediately form a task force charged with developing a more complete set of actions to address the adverse impacts of water pollution.