

Informal Remarks by Bob Lohn at the Shared Strategy Event in Tukwila, Wash., on Jan. 19, 2007

As I was listening to this morning's discussion about how the Shared Strategy's recovery plan for Puget Sound Chinook will be implemented, I was impressed yet again with how the strength of this plan lies in the people who created it, and in the way they went about it.

If salmon recovery in Puget Sound were based solely on law, we would see due process scrupulously observed, but we would not get salmon recovery. Salmon recovery requires a level of care, concern, and action that goes well beyond what governments or laws can compel.

If salmon recovery were based solely on science, we would see hypotheses carefully tested and much increase in knowledge, but we would not get salmon recovery. Salmon recovery requires action in the face of uncertainty, and a vision that goes beyond what we can measure and prove.

If salmon recovery were based solely on a love for the resource and a sincere desire to see recovery, we might get salmon recovery -- for I never want to deny the power of love joined with commitment. But unguided and unsupported passion is more likely to be unsustainable, flaming brightly at first, but burning out before the goal is reached. Passion alone will not bring us to the end of what Bill Ruckelshaus has memorably called a "long, hard slog."

Today we celebrate the melding of law, science, and love for the resource. Today, in the *Federal Register*, a notice appears affirming the work of the Shared Strategy. The *Federal Register* is the federal record that documents the official decisions of the government of the United States. In a very real sense, this is the day in which the work of the Shared Strategy enters history.

The notice declares that the Shared Strategy's recovery plan has been adopted as the federal government's recovery plan. It highlights, verbatim, the vision that Shared Strategy has for this plan:

To recover self-sustaining, harvestable salmon runs in a manner that contributes to the overall health of Puget Sound and its watersheds and allows us to enjoy and use this precious resource in concert with our region's economic vitality and prosperity.

In describing this achievement, superlatives are in order. While there is no Guinness Book of ESA World Records, if there were one, this plan would hold honors in several categories.

As far as I'm aware, this is the largest ESA recovery plan ever created in terms of the land area actually affected. It is undoubtedly the largest salmon recovery plan ever created.

This is the most sophisticated recovery plan ever created in terms of integrating a thorough and detailed scientific foundation with other, equally vital, foundational elements such

as the treaty rights of our Puget Sound tribes and the local interests of a multitude of local watershed, city, county, and state entities.

And, in my view, the Shared Strategy also receives the award for the most practical recovery plan. It not only has the technical elements necessary for successful implementation, but also comes with the support and relationships necessary to see it actually carried out.

Within this Administration, and within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, there has been great emphasis on two important aspects of recovery: ecosystem planning and Cooperative Conservation. I can think of no better example of either than this plan, and the effort that brought it into being.

While this morning's discussion seemed filled with challenges, it gives me great encouragement. It touched on exactly the set of issues we need to address to move ahead: funding, accountability, adaptive management, governance, and legislative support. The fact that we are taking these issues up and seeking solutions shows that we are not only ready to move ahead, we are already moving.

As we mark this day, we declare both achievement and confidence. We have together solved huge problems to reach this plan. While I will not diminish the challenges ahead, from this day we should take confidence that, whatever those next challenges may be, we can, together, overcome them as well.

Thank you for making salmon recovery a reality.