

**Shared Strategy for Puget Sound
Comments on April 2006 Three Year Work Plan
Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed
(WRIA 9)**

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.

This feedback is intended to assist your recovery planning team as you refine your three-year work program and continue with implementation of your Chinook 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 all 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 provided as guidance for the development of work programs

The following objectives were provided as guidance to watersheds in the development of the work plan. The Shared Strategy Work Group and TRT developed the objectives pursuant to consultation with watershed 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. The questions and TRT's review comments are below.

1. Is the work program consistent with the hypotheses and strategy for their watershed? *(The work program includes hypotheses and strategies in the larger plan, including watershed plan, TRT review comments and NOAA Supplement comments).*

Yes. The work plan is consistent with the hypotheses and strategy for the watershed. The Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed plan targets the lower mainstem river as the geographic area most limiting productivity of the population and targets most efforts in the 10 year plan (and this three-year offspring) at these areas. However, it does not neglect actions targeted at an alternative hypothesis of limitations posed by middle river habitats, directing some actions at rearing and spawning habitats in that area.

2. Is the sequencing and timing of their work program appropriate for the first three years of implementation?

While difficult to determine directly, the implication of the work program is that the transition zone and lower river are the first order of actions in the watershed. However, middle river projects seem to have some momentum, as evidenced in the project and action list. The practical outcome is that the actions will not have a clear order of implementation nor will there be a biologically logical sequence during the first three years.

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

Yes. Hatchery and harvest components are missing from the plan. This is particularly critical in testing the primary hypothesis that low survival of natural origin recruits, already depressed by habitat limitations in the transition zone and lower river, is exacerbated by large releases of young Chinook from the Soos Creek Hatchery coincidental with the arrival of these recruits from the middle watershed. The three year work program could contemplate staggered releases from the hatchery as a way of testing the hypothesis and aiding the survival of NORs. Flow recommendations are also absent from the plan even though modifications in the flow regime are hypothesized to be a strong controller of diversity and spatial structure for this population.

Comments on how well the plan addresses objectives

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

Yes. The plan recommends many actions to preserve habitats throughout the watershed by acquisitions and programs aimed at promoting better land and water stewardship.

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

Somewhat. The plan proposes habitat protections and improvements that are intended to largely benefit natural origin recruits from this watershed (although the lower river projects will benefit hatchery origin recruits as well). However, the population is largely an integrated one and separation of a developing natural origin (sub)population is not discussed here.

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

Somewhat. This is not a primary focus of the three-year work program. The protection of critical processes in the lower Green/Duwamish River is problematic given the level of landscape change and is more a concern in the middle and upper river and is anticipated later in the 10 year plan. Moreover, no recommendations for flow regime modification—a main driver of riverine processes-- are found in this work program.

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

The plan does not advance the integration of management of the population. Primarily a habitat work plan, it relies on the regional process and adaptive management for movement in this area.

It is important that the watershed recovery team continue to review 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, 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 Green/Duwamish three-year work program as well as gaps and special issues warranting attention. Specific comments are provided below, followed by a short discussion of comments common to all watersheds.

Comments and special issues

The work program displays a good variety and mix of non-capital programs to implement the habitat plan and to expand and deepen support for plan implementation.

Although the work program refers to specific focus areas, the work program would be strengthened by providing a clear discussion of prioritization and logical sequencing of projects.

Cost estimates for non-capital programs and projects, as well as estimates of matching or other funds in hand for project implementation would assist with the development of a regional investment strategy.

As the work program is refined, it would be helpful to clarify links between the narrative and tables. It is not clear whether an analysis has been conducted of remaining high quality habitat that is important for protection in the Middle Green, Soos Creek, and Newaukum Creek. It is important that the planning team identify tools and means through which protection of sites with high habitat values will be achieved.

The planning team is encouraged to build support within the business community, particularly the Boeing Corporation, due to their influence in the Lower Duwamish/transition zone and with the Port of Seattle due to their influence in the Lower Duwamish and Elliott Bay nearshore.

As is true with technical feedback, it is important that the Green/Duwamish habitat planning team and expanded H-Integration and adaptive management team continue to refer to the 2005 policy feedback and regional recovery plan (Vol. 1) as they refine the three-year habitat work schedule and develop and the adaptive management plan.

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."