

Puyallup/White and Clover/Chambers (WRIAs 10 and 12) Shared Strategy Feedback for Decision Makers

I. Key Questions for Regional Summit: The following questions are important to determine the contribution of the Puyallup/White and Clover/Chambers watersheds to regional salmon recovery in the next ten years. Answers to these questions by the end of December 2004 will support regional consensus on the direction for Puget Sound salmon recovery at the January 2005 summit.

1. What are your long-term measurable goals and ten year objectives? Of the habitat, harvest and hatchery conditions necessary to support the populations in your watershed, which can you make significant progress on in the 10-year timeframe?
2. What conditions are necessary to implement the actions identified in your 10-year timeframe? Are the conditions supported by those responsible for the implementation? If funding during the next ten years is not available for all areas where you would like to make significant progress, how would you prioritize actions?
3. What actions are necessary to achieve the protection of existing functions? What conditions must be in place to achieve protection? Are these conditions supported by those responsible for implementation?

II. Essential decisions for Final Watershed Chapter: Based on the June submittal, the summer review process, and our best scientific understanding, the Technical Recovery Team and Work Group consider the following policy decisions as the most important to answer by April 30, 2004. This will increase the certainty that actions taken in the next ten years will move us on a trajectory toward recovery.

1. Protection – management actions and a timeline to protect South Prairie Creek and remaining habitats
2. Fish passage at Electron Dam – Timeline and steps to implement screen project and related improvements
3. Levee setback projects, off-channel reconnections and large woody debris: timeline, steps and commitments to a target number of projects selected from EDT results and other studies and measurable goals for project planning and design and project implementation
4. Flows: Timeline and steps to address reaches with flow problems for fish in the White River and Puyallup River as identified in the Central Puget Sound Low Flow Survey (review draft 8-27-04) and other studies
5. Estuary: Timeline, steps and commitments to a target number of projects selected from the EDT candidate list and other studies

6. All-H Integration: Completion of the White River Chinook Recovery Plan update; identify the timeline, steps and funding needed to complete the update. Identify the implementation actions in the next ten years to integrate harvest, hatchery and habitat management.
7. Adaptive Management: identification of an adaptive management structure to monitor and manage progress toward recovery

III. Increasing ESU Certainty: The Technical Recovery Team suggests that addressing the following will increase the certainty of meeting ESU recovery and should be noted in the plan with a brief statement of long-term strategy to address, even if actions are not possible to develop at this time.

1. Develop measurable goals/fish population targets: Planning targets have not been provided by the co-managers for the Puyallup Chinook and White River Chinook. The EDT report estimates potential abundance, after implementing a series of actions, which would be within the planning range provided by the TRT for Puyallup Chinook. Estimates developed through EDT analysis for the White River population under two scenarios: 1) assuming continued operation of the White River hydroelectric facility, 2) assuming that the hydroelectric facility ceases operation. (*Salmon Habitat Restoration & Protection Efforts in WRIA 10 – Puyallup/White & WRIA 12 – Clover/Chambers*, June 30, 2004, p. 7)

In addition to habitat factors, the EDT report and White River Spring Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan (July 1996) contain information that is helpful in setting measurable goals and benchmarks toward recovery.

2. All-H Integration: Develop timetable and steps with co-managers to achieve all-H integration.
3. Estuary: A strategy and identification and implementation of a set of actions to increase estuarine habitat area and functions through restoration will benefit both the Puyallup Chinook and the White River Chinook. The EDT report provides a list of candidate actions together with evaluations of technical feasibility, certainty of outcome and approximate cost.
4. Fish passage: The EDT analysis identified the Electron diversion screen project as the top ranked action for Puyallup Chinook, estimating that it would produce a 34% increase in abundance, a 10% increase in productivity, and a 27% increase in life history diversity (EDT, 49).
5. Instream Flows: Develop timetable and steps to address instream flows. Priority attention should be given to the restoration of flows to the White River Hydroelectric Project Bypass Reach and more normal flows from the Mud Mountain Dam; modifications to Mud Mountain Dam operations to achieve maximum natural hydrologic

processes functions and natural river flow in the PSE bypass, identified in the EDT report as two of the top three freshwater actions for White River Chinook (EDT, 53).

6. Levee setbacks, off-channel reconnections and large woody debris: Mainstem restoration actions included in the EDT candidate actions include the following:
 - Actions to increase large woody debris - LWD collection and distribution below Mud Mountain Dam was identified as one of the top three freshwater actions for Chinook and other species in the lower White River watershed (EDT Report, 53).
 - Levee setbacks, fish passage barrier removal, off channel habitat reconnection, and other actions and studies to improve channel connectivity
7. Protection: The development of a strategy, set of actions and timeline to ensure protection of all existing areas and functions of nearshore, forage fish rearing habitats and spawning beaches, and freshwater tributaries would increase certainty of achieving recovery; identification, development and implementation of actions needed where gaps exist in protection.

The EDT report indicates that special attention should be directed to the protection of South Prairie Creek, a tributary of the Carbon River, which is characterized as the “backbone of natural salmonid production” in the Lower Carbon River subbasin and Puyallup watershed.

IV. Highlights of Summer Review: This section summarizes our understanding of your responses to the six questions from your June submission and August discussions.

A. Information about the planning approach, conditions necessary to achieve recovery and measurable goals

1. Planning Group: Is there a group working to complete a draft chapter?

Pierce County provided a submittal on June 30th which included EDT results and analyses that were jointly reviewed and discussed with co-managers, USFS, and representatives of other jurisdictions and agencies. The draft submittal was sent to the Port of Tacoma and the Puyallup Tribe ten days prior June 30th. To date, there is no group that is working together to submit material to Shared Strategy.

2. Recovery Conditions: Has the watershed group identified the conditions (habitat, harvest, and hatchery) necessary to reach recovery?

No. To date, there is no established group that is collectively developing a recovery plan. However, the Puyallup Tribe, together with US Forest Service, WDFW, Pierce County, the Port of Tacoma and other jurisdictions cooperated in an EDT analysis from which candidate lists for protection and restoration were generated and are being used.

3. Measurable Goals: Has the watershed group endorsed the planning targets as a long-term goal? If not, what is their goal?

No planning ranges and targets have been established for White River (early run) Chinook populations and provided to a recovery planning group by the TRT or co-managers. Planning ranges and targets for the Puyallup River Chinook have been established by the TRT and co-managers; however, there is no group collectively developing a recovery plan. The TRT Planning Range for abundance, with productivity in the parentheses, is reported as 17,000 – 33,000 (1.0). The Planning targets for abundance and productivity are 18,000 (1.0) – 5,300 (2.3). The EDT report estimates predicted “potential abundances” from scenarios of implementation actions (June 30th submittal, p. 7)

4. Long-term Contribution to ESU Recovery: What is the long term contribution of the independent spawning populations using this watershed for ESU recovery? To achieve ESU recovery, the TRT draft delisting criteria recommend that all populations show significant improvements. Also, based upon the delisting criteria, 2-4 populations in each of the five sub-regions must achieve the planning targets and other viable salmonid population parameters (VSP). These criteria are not intended to limit additional populations in each of the five regions from achieving the planning targets.

In regard to the TRT draft delisting criteria, the Central Sound populations that must meet the planning target have not been defined with the exception of the White River (early run) Chinook, which must meet planning targets and other viable salmonid population parameters (core/low risk). There is not sufficient information yet for the Puyallup Chinook population to know whether the long term contributions of these populations will be supportive or core/low risk.

B. Highlights of improvements completed or underway or existing protections of ecological functions that support recovery. (Results for fish have not been evaluated.)

1. Fish access and passage: Several fish access and passage improvements through culvert removals and replacements have been completed and/or are underway. The reopening of upstream passage above the Electron Dam resulted in a significant increase of mainstem and tributary stream spawning and rearing habitat.
2. Contaminated Sediments: Sediment remediation activities and intertidal habitat restoration projects have been completed or are underway in the Commencement Bay and waterways.
3. Floodplain reconnection: Levee setback projects have been initiated and some are completed or underway.

4. Riparian: Most of the Upper Puyallup River watershed riparian functions are managed under the Forest and Fish agreement and HCPs.
5. Protections: Existing regulatory programs provide recognition for and some level of protection for all freshwater areas and nearshore (forage fish spawning beaches and habitats) which provide functions and values that support Chinook and bull trout
6. Harvest: Significant reductions in harvest have been made by the co-managers.

C. Significant proposals – Proposed strategy that strives to significantly protect or improve an important factor for recovery with actions that can be evaluated qualitatively or quantitatively for their results for fish; total cost of proposal(s)

Hydro-modifications: The cessation of power generation on White River Dam by Puget Sound Energy is expected to result in improvements in flows and other habitat functions that support fish.

D. Poised – The watershed has designed or initiated a process that will result in the development of significant proposals to improve conditions for fish. Anticipated or resulting proposals should be included in the recovery chapter.

1. Identification of strategies and actions addressing limiting factors: Co-managers, federal, state, county and local jurisdictions, including the Port of Tacoma cooperated in diagnosing habitat conditions and identifying, analyzing and prioritizing candidate actions based on projected outcomes using EDT. The resulting prioritized list of restoration actions and action groupings provides a strong technical basis for habitat restoration project planning.

Total cost of proposals: The “cost and conservative” cost estimate for on-the-ground actions modeled in the EDT project is \$248,000,000 for freshwater projects, and \$142,000,000 for estuary and bay projects. (Salmon Habitat Restoration and Protection Efforts, WRIAs 10- Puyallup/White & WRIA 12 Clover/Chambers, 12, p. 8-10).

Costs of changes in harvest and hatchery management practices, regulatory updates, incentives and other programmatic actions are not included.

2. White River Chinook Recovery planning: The co-managers developed a recovery plan for White River Chinook salmon in 1996 which identifies and prioritizes habitat, harvest and hatchery management actions. They are currently updating the recovery plan and have an opportunity to consider habitat capacity issues based on improved protections and habitat restoration and actions included in the candidate action list generated by the EDT analysis and other lines of evidence.

3. Reconstruction of the Army Corps of Engineer’s (ACOE) Mud Mountain project barrier dam and fish passage facilities has been identified and is being addressed as a key issue in the ACOE consultations with the Services on operations of the project.

4. Nearshore Assessment: The Key Peninsula, Gig Harbor and Islands (KGI) watershed nearshore assessment identifies high quality and impaired habitats for protection and restoration.
5. Levee setbacks: A proposal has been submitted to the SRFB for funding to identify levee setback projects using the EDT list and to design a subset of those identified.