

Snohomish Watershed (WRIA 7) Shared Strategy Feedback for Decision-Makers

I. Key Questions for Regional Summit: The following questions are important to determine the contribution of the Snohomish watershed 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. The following questions are intended to confirm the goals and measurable outcomes the watershed is pursuing for salmon recovery and key decision-maker support for this approach.

1. We are asking many watersheds to answer the question of where they can make significant progress in the 10 year timeframe relative to the planning targets. It is our understanding from the draft materials submitted on June 30, 2004 and the August meeting with the TRT and Work Group that the significant proposals summarized in Section IV below comprise the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum's answer to this question.
2. Forum support of the current chapter is a very strong basis from which to identify the policy conditions necessary to determine commitments from key decision-makers. Do the Snohomish County Council, King County Council, city elected officials, the Tulalip Board of Directors and other decision-makers with representatives on the Forum endorse pursuing the planning targets and other viable salmonid population parameters, and the proposed 10 year actions and the policy recommendations within their jurisdictional authority?
3. What policy conditions are necessary to pursue the planning targets, the proposed 10 year actions and the policy recommendations identified in the plan? Are these policy conditions supported by those responsible for implementation?
4. If funding during the next ten years is not available for all areas where you would like to make significant progress, how will decision-makers prioritize actions?
5. Protection of existing function is still highly uncertain across Puget Sound. What is necessary to achieve the protection of existing functions? What policy conditions must be in place to achieve protection? Are these policy conditions supported by those responsible for implementation?

The policy recommendations in Section 9 combined with the sub-basin analyses describing remaining intact areas provide an initial

answer the first question of what is necessary to protect existing functions.

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 the Work Group consider the following policy decisions as the most important to answer and include in the chapter 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. The questions below are intended to provide more detailed information for the final plan by focusing specifically on how the goals and measurable outcomes will be accomplished.

1. Protection of existing function will be critical to achieving the desired 10 year results. How will local governments protect existing function as detailed in the policy recommendations outlined in the plan? How will stakeholders such as land trusts, non-profits, and individual landowners protect existing functions and habitats not protected through regulatory mechanisms consistent with the habitat goals stated in the plan?
2. What harvest and hatchery actions will the co-managers include for the 10-year plan and what results will those actions combined with the habitat actions have for fish?
3. How will decision-makers protect existing flows and what are the potential steps for protecting existing flows and resolving low flow issues in the 10 year timeframe?
4. How will adaptive management be structured to monitor and manage progress toward recovery? Will existing programs and resources, such as Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups, contribute to monitoring efforts?

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 it is not possible to develop actions at this time.

1. Include a strategy or process for the protection and restoration of flows.
2. H-integration: A habitat, harvest and hatchery integration strategy must be reflected in the recovery plans. The strategy should describe the development and use of tools to assess the combined effects of habitat, harvest and hatchery actions.
3. Protection: Evaluate each jurisdiction's Critical Area Ordinance, Shoreline Master Program and other ordinances and voluntary programs relative to the

needs stated for recovery in the plan. Where gaps exist in protection, determine what actions are needed.

IV. Highlights of Summer Review 2004: This section summarizes our understanding of your responses to the six questions from your June submissions and August discussions.

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

Planning Group: Is there a group working to complete a chapter? Yes, the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum (Forum) is a multi-stakeholder group committed to writing and implementing the plan.

Recovery Conditions: Has the watershed group identified the conditions (habitat, harvest and hatchery) necessary to reach the planning target? Yes

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

The Forum also endorsed habitat targets for the 10-year timeframe and predicted results for the fish from those efforts relative to diversity, abundance and productivity. The plan includes an implementation and adaptive management framework and describes the Forum's role in measuring progress.

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 recommends 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. These criteria are not intended to limit additional populations in each of the five regions from achieving the planning targets. These criteria are not intended to limit additional populations in each of the five regions from achieving the planning targets.

The watershed planning team has adopted planning targets. This contribution is encouraged.

Multiple populations use the nearshore and marine environments of Snohomish County, however, the ten chinook populations most likely to intensely use these habitats for juvenile rearing come from the Snohomish, Stillaguamish and Skagit rivers. The Stillaguamish group has endorsed the planning targets and is working to achieve low risk populations. The Skagit river system does not currently have a group that has determined the goal they are trying to achieve. However, the TRT delisting criteria would encourage some if not all Skagit populations to achieve the planning targets. Based on the TRT delisting criteria, nearshore, marine and tributaries to Puget Sound not identified as primary freshwater habitat for any of the 22 identified chinook populations should be functioning in a manner that is sufficient to support an ESU-wide recovery scenario. Specifically, this means that the contribution of Snohomish County habitat will need to be consistent in the long term with the role for the Skagit, Stillaguamish and Snohomish populations if these aspirations are to be met.

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

1. Protection: The implementation of each jurisdiction's Critical Area Ordinance and Shoreline Master Program, Forest and Fish and other ordinances and voluntary programs contribute to the protection of habitat functions and values that support chinook and bull trout. In addition, the City of Everett's SMP includes policies that require restoration of riparian buffers where they do not currently exist as a pre-requisite for redevelopment along the City's shorelines.
2. Riparian: A broad range of partners have planted riparian corridors throughout the Snohomish basin and are protecting existing function through regulatory and voluntary measures. Large woody debris installation has occurred in concert with longer term riparian restoration.
3. Water quality: A broad range of partners are working to improve water quality conditions through outfall improvements, agricultural BMPs, and other actions.
4. Floodplain conditions: Improvements have been made through side channel reconnections and gains in functioning edge habitat.
5. Estuary: Significant acquisition and restoration of estuarine habitats including actions that benefit water quality.
6. Nearshore: Jetty Island restoration and cleanup of the Mukilteo Tank Farm.
7. Harvest: Significant reductions in harvest have been made by the co-managers. Current co-manager harvest rates are sufficiently low to allow populations to grow when other factors (improved freshwater and nearshore habitat, improved marine conditions) allow.

8. Hatchery: Many basin-specific hazards have been minimized through improved hatchery practices including a change in broodstock and reduction in production of chinook and coho at Wallace River Hatchery.

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)

The Forum evaluated alternative restoration strategies for the long-term (using SHIRAZ modeling) and then chose to pursue the second most aggressive long-term strategy. Looking at their long-term goal guided them in setting the following 10 year benchmarks. The following proposals were included in the June 30th, 2004 submission and results are based on EDT modeling that has not been verified by the TRT.

1. Fish access: Replace 60 blocking culverts.
2. Channel conditions (edge habitat): Protect 236 miles and restore 11 miles.
3. Riparian conditions: In the mainstem protect 5,991 acres and restore 256 acres.
4. LWD: Install 41 log jams.
5. Floodplain conditions: Protect 236 acres and restore 137 acres of off-channel habitat.
6. Water quantity: Protect against magnitude and frequency of peak flows.
7. Nearshore: Protect 8.4 miles and restore 1 mile of shoreline.
8. Estuary: Protect 1, 483 acres and restore 1, 237 acres.
9. Harvest: Maintain an overall exploitation rate below 24%.

The result that EDT predicts these proposals will have for fish is:

Snoqualmie gains:	Diversity: +9%
	Productivity: +50%
	Abundance: +79% (over current path)
Skykomish gains:	Diversity: +1%
	Productivity: +16%
	Abundance: +36% (over current path)

The harvest model predicts that maintaining annual exploitation rates below 24% will contribute to recovery through increased age at spawning, increased average size, increased average fecundity, and representation of all age classes in the population. Under current conditions of freshwater and marine survival, the Skykomish population is predicted to exceed the maximum sustainable harvest level at least 80% of the time. This percentage will increase if freshwater and marine conditions improve.

Total Cost of Proposal: The total cost for habitat improvements for the 10 year timeframe: Approximately \$135.6 million

Note: Nearshore acquisition for protection or restoration is not included in this cost.

The plan also provides significant policy recommendations for consideration and implementation. General recommendations are provided regarding the importance of integrating salmon recovery with existing state and federal mandates, adoption by local jurisdictions of the planning targets, protection of existing salmon habitat and watershed functions, mitigation, noxious weed removal, public outreach and education, technical assistance, incentives and compliance. Specific policy recommendations are provided for land use, wetlands, stream buffers, infrastructure in wetland and stream buffers, shoreline modifications, floodplain alterations, channel migration zones, landslide hazard zones, clearing and grading, retention of large woody debris, stormwater, and water quality.

The plan also proposes agency and organization implementation responsibilities in preparation for gaining commitments to actions.

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. CAO and SMP updates: Snohomish County is currently in the process of updating their CAO and SMP. Both WRIA 5 and WRIA 7 have recovery plans that define areas critical to protect in support salmon recovery.
2. Sediment: The US Forest Service is working on Access and Travel Management Plans in the South and Middle Fork Snoqualmie which identify culverts and roads for decommissioning.
3. H- integration: The Snohomish is poised to take the integration of harvest, hatchery and habitat to the next level because of the technical and policy work that has been done to date.
4. Hatchery: The Wallace River and Tulalip Hatchery chinook programs will be better integrated with the Skykomish native chinook stock through incorporation of naturally-produced fish into hatchery broodstock and the maintenance of the upper Wallace River as a natural production area with limited hatchery influence. The co-managers are currently completing the details of these program changes.

