

November 19, 2008

Hi all,

I've been thinking about the problems we've been having with prioritizing the questions. I think I can better articulate my thoughts now than I did at the meeting - at least I'm going to try... sorry up front for the long email!

The criteria seem to be blending policy direction (such as "where does the priority come from?") with technical issues ("how long would a study take to answer the question?")

To progress more easily, it seems to me that there are the following 7 steps - the first 6 of which need to be done by June 2009.

Hopefully this helps you understand what I was trying to say last week.

Kit

I. Identify policy direction first

we should clearly articulate specific questions/issues from the policy people who will be "grading" our results - the Partnership, Ecology, and ultimately the public (who has to agree to fund these things). This means pulling out issues/questions from the Action Agenda/Science Plan and asking Ecology articulate the key questions/mandates they must follow to meet the Clean Water Act/NPDES permits. If the questions are not on our list already, then they should be added. Drop all other questions that don't have a policy interface at this point. Not saying they aren't important, just that they probably aren't ready to move forward yet.

This would:

- 1) reflect that we are the support team for the "policy engine" in Puget Sound - that we are not the decision-makers, but rather the technical support to the decision-makers

- 2) get away from the "dot exercise" where people pick their favorite parameter

- 3) set the issues for the **technical** sequencing and prioritization

Recognize that we are basically in the early stages of stormwater management and have been told to "go forth" - which basically means "anywhere but here!" We will figure out the final direction as we learn more about how this stuff. We also need to have a **few** things that we have success with, so that we can build trust and capacity with the consortium. That was one of the key lessons from the California monitoring consortiums - on the first try don't try to do it all at once. Start small and build upon your successes.

II. Use the technical/management criteria that the task force (sub-subcommittee?) provided to prioritize BIG policy questions - using the sub-questions for those that want more detail to help articulate the bigger questions and assure that we are all thinking the same thing.

Set up a matrix - could also be divided into short (BMP effectiveness)/med (cumulative effectiveness/loading)/long term (trends/cause & effect) monitoring responses.

The types of criteria I am thinking include: Will the information help direct management choices (e.g. help prioritize where to retrofit)? Is this a key threat to Puget Sound or sub-area? Do we currently have the capacity to affect change in the issue? Would the monitoring or management engage a wide diversity of entities?

Again, this would provide due diligence that our efforts were not arbitrary like a dot exercise. Help distill an overwhelming number of potential questions to a few that we could get started on, have a chance of early success, and build upon as we get the consortium going, build trust with each other, etc. We can't do it all, what do we have a chance of achieving?

III. Send task force(s) off to research *what is already known* and bring back a concept for bridging the monitoring gaps e.g. effectiveness for xyz management action: randomized rotating panel vs before/after/control experiment (**NOT** final SOP/QAPP/etc) within 2-3 months. This could be done with consulting contract(s) overseen by the task force(s) or by technical support from participating entities.

IV. Sub-committee reviews task force summaries and recommendations - balancing what is known vs needed and reality checking the monitoring approach. The subcommittee discusses who would be the most appropriate group to be responsible for the work under their legal requirements/mandates - locals, state, federal, others?

V. Full workgroup reviews draft priority questions, approach, and likely entities. Modifies as needed and agrees to move proposal to policy groups.

VI. Priority questions, approach, and potential entities reviewed and approved by Partnership and Ecology by June 2009.

VII. Only then, ship off task force(s) to develop monitoring SOP/QAPP etc. for NPDES - and Partnership, if requested. If there is clear guidance on what is expected through the question and approach, there shouldn't be a problem developing NPDES (and Partnership) monitoring plans by June 2010.