

PUGET SOUND COORDINATED MONITORING PROGRAM

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, 5 December 2007 9:00 AM – Noon
University of Washington Tacoma
The Tacoma Room (GWP Room 320)

Final Summary

OF THE COMMITTEE'S KEY DISCUSSIONS, DECISIONS AND AGREEMENTS

Attendees and the organizations they represent:

Pam Bennett-Cumming, Mason County; **Sarah Brace**, Puget Sound Partnership; **Paul Bucich**, City of Federal Way; **Bill Derry**, APWA Stormwater Managers; **Karen Dinicola**, Washington State Department of Ecology and the Governance Committee's project manager; **Tom Eaton**, United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10; **Stuart Glasoe**, Washington State Department of Health; **Kris Holm**, Business Groups; **Doug MacDonald**, unaffiliated; **Fran McNair**, Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR); **Kit Paulsen**, City of Bellevue; **Joanna Richey**, King County; **The Hon. Lynda Ring-Erickson**, Commissioner, Mason County; **Michael Rylko**, EPA; **Mark Sadler**, City of Everett; **Melodie Selby**, Department of Ecology; **Pete Schroeder**, Lead Entity Advisory Group; **Carol Smith**, Conservation Commission; **Ken Stone**, Washington State Department of Transportation; **Heather Trim** (People for Puget Sound), Environmental Groups and the Environmental Caucus of the Puget Sound Partnership; **Bob Woolrich**, Department of Health; **Terry Wright**, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC); and **Jim Reid**, facilitator.

COMMITTEE REITERATES AND REAFFIRMS MISSION

As the result of their opening discussion at this, their second meeting, Committee members reiterated and reaffirmed the Committee's mission. Here are the most salient points of the discussion:

- The establishment of a Puget Sound Coordinated Monitoring Program, and of this committee and the Technical Advisory Committee, were recommendations of the Surface Water and Aquatic Habitat Monitoring Advisory Committee, a twenty-six-member body comprised of representatives of local, state and federal agencies, and of private business. *(The 9 March 2007 report and recommendations of that group may be accessed by going on-line to Ecology's website: http://www.ecv.wa.gov/programs/wq/links/ps_monitoring.html)*
- In response to the March 2007 report, the Department of Ecology recommended to the Governor's Office, the Governor's budget recommended, and the Legislature adopted in the 2008-'09 budget a proviso to give Ecology \$800,000 to launch the work of the Governance and Technical Advisory Committees. *(Budget proviso to be sent to Committee members during the week of 17-21 December.)*

- We need to avoid duplication of effort and create an “umbrella” for linking the monitoring that is being conducted by numerous entities. To that end, the Committee intends to carefully coordinate and communicate with representatives of the Puget Sound Partnership, including both the Leadership Council and the Science Panel, the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program (PSAMP), the Washington Monitoring Forum (formerly the Governor’s Monitoring Forum), the Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office, and the Tribes, as well as with representatives of other Tribal, federal, state, local and private programs and initiatives that this Committee’s discussions and any recommendations from it could affect or influence.
- A coordinated monitoring effort needs to have a broader focus than stormwater.
- Coordinated monitoring must address the interests and needs of rural communities as well as those of urban and suburban communities.
- The Committee has no preconceived ideas about where a coordinated monitoring effort would be housed. The members intend to offer options, and perhaps recommend one, that would recognize, respect, coordinate and collaborate with other forums, organizations and initiatives that are also working to improve the health of the Puget Sound and lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands in the Puget Sound basin.
- The Department of Ecology believes it is crucial that substantial and meaningful progress in launching the coordinated monitoring program for Puget Sound is achieved within a year, meaning by early to mid-autumn 2008.
- The Technical Advisory Committee is assessing eight potential pilot projects to help build the credibility of the program. The criteria that the Committee will use to evaluate them and determine which pilot projects to recommend are: a) builds the credibility of the process; b) tests working relationships; c) provides credible and meaningful information that addresses the framework questions; d) encourages leveraging of resources; e) is voluntary (“a coalition of the willing”) and attracts additional participants over time; f) is simple; and g) can get going in less than one year.
- A major challenge facing the region is whether we keep “raking in” data that continues to be ignored, or whether we revamp our efforts to put into place a more effective framework for managing, learning from and applying data. The latter choice should be a primary goal or function of a coordinated monitoring program.

To do list: Based on this discussion, here are follow-up items for the Committee, which project manager Karen Dinicola, supported by facilitator Jim Reid, will do or coordinate:

1. Send to the Committee members the budget provision providing \$800,000 to Ecology to launch this effort.
2. Request of the Puget Sound Partnership’s Science Panel (at its January meeting) the opportunity to provide an overview of the discussions to date of this committee and the Technical Advisory Committee.
3. Through Committee member Sara Brace, follow the progress of the Puget Sound Action Team, which is are now part of the Puget Sound Partnership, as its members explore the future role of PSAMP. We will get a copy of the “white paper” outlining options for its future.

4. Find out about and help the Governance Committee become aligned with the new salmon/watershed “Adaptive Management and Monitoring Program” (AMAM) that began under the Shared Salmon Strategy for Puget Sound.
5. Through Committee member Tom Eaton, who chairs the “federal caucus,” invite members of that caucus to join this Committee.
6. At either the January or February meetings of the Governance Committee, present the Technical Advisory Committee’s “scoping” of and recommendations for pilot projects.
7. Coordinate with subcommittees of the Washington Monitoring Forum so that neither of us “reinvents the wheel.”

INITIAL REACTIONS TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE’S REPORT

On 3 October the Committee agreed to use the March 2007 Monitoring Advisory Committee’s findings on the roles, responsibilities and organizational structures of various coordinated monitoring programs across the nation as the starting point to develop 3-4 “large” alternatives for organizing coordinated monitoring in the Puget Sound region. A subcommittee was established to present those options to the Committee. Subcommittee members are Sarah Brace, Karen Dinicola, Joanna Richey and Heather Trim.

At this meeting the subcommittee made its initial presentation, and solicited from the entire group initial reactions. *(See attached documents from the subcommittee report, which consist of a one-page summary of key questions, functions and characteristics, and a table illustrating organizational models. Both are dated 5 December 2007.)* They were:

- The key question that the subcommittee has posed is correct. “Are we on the road to recovery?”
- While some states or organizations do it differently, our intent is to create an umbrella for examining the health of the entire ecosystem. One outcome of this effort could be to help a diversity of agencies collect and analyze data in a more consistent manner.
- A coordinated monitoring structure should help create a “cross walk” between four uses of monitoring: a) enforcement, in which we “lower the boom” on the bad guys; b) management, which is useful for taking action; c) communication, which helps answer the question of whether or not the ecosystem is getting better; and d) basic science (for example: “How are toxins affecting oysters?”).
- It could help our deliberations to develop a list of the organizations that are undertaking monitoring and the kinds of monitoring in which they are engaged, and to “map” their relationships with each other. If it illustrates a diagram of lots of activities but no connections between them, that will tell a story, and would assist us in knowing who to talk to, how to organize or coordinate the disparate efforts, what are the “big picture” questions, and what might be some regional priorities (a “pecking order” of monitoring efforts).

- A structure for coordinated monitoring should enable us to more effectively determine what might be more appropriate to monitor and address at a regional level than at a local effort, and to “pool” our efforts. (Example: monitoring and addressing the impacts of zinc.)
- There are advantages and disadvantages in how coordinated regional monitoring is structured, and where it is housed. If coordinated regional monitoring is housed in a federal or state agency, it will likely become part of the existing regulatory framework. It is also likely to get funding from Congress. If housed at the Puget Sound Partnership, it could become a “front” for a political agenda. This would provide the closest link to the Science Panel. At a university, the program would have access to science and information technology. The risk is that graduate students would be doing the work. If it operates as a formal collaborative model, it might be limited to one issue.
- Organizing the program as an NGO might be advantageous because it could offer the flexibility to get something on the ground faster and sooner, and to build something bigger. It might also be perceived as more neutral and independent, and thus would inspire confidence from dischargers and others who would donate funding. But a disadvantage is that it would be one more entity “out there,” and not tied to anything and there would not be an organization to “fall back on.”
- Might the governance body be tied to or part of the Puget Sound Partnership, but the organization itself be an NGO?
- Might there be a transition period in which the organization starts with “joint powers” before evolving into an NGO?
- Could it be closely linked to Urban Waters in Tacoma? “Urban” would need to not be in the title if we are to achieve one of the Committee’s interests in addressing the interests and needs of rural communities as well as urban.
- The grant-approval authority of the Puget Sound Partnership needs to be considered in deciding where it should be housed, and could be an argument for making it part of the PSP or at least closely aligned.
- We should also consider flexible models in which there may not be an overarching governance structure but which involve collaboration.

To do list: One follow-up item from this discussion is to add to the table of organizational options the names of organizations that are examples of the option.

NEXT STEPS

At the Committee’s next meeting on Thursday, 10 January 2008, the group will assess these organizational models in more details.

THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE’S NEXT MEETING IS THURSDAY, 10 JANUARY 2008