PUGET SOUND MONITORING CONSORTIUM

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 7 May 2008 9:00 AM – Noon
Tacoma Nature Center, 1919 S Tyler St., Tacoma

Draft Summary

OF THE MEETING'S KEY DISCUSSIONS, DECISIONS AND AGREEMENTS

ATTENDEES:

Paul Bucich, Federal Way; **Chris Burke**, Tacoma; **Luanne Coachman**, King County; **Dana de Leon**, Tacoma; **Karen Dinicola**, ECY/Project Manager; **Ken Dzinbal**, Ecology; **Leska Fore**, Statistical Design; **Dick Gersib**, WSDOT; **Gary Gill**, PNNL; **Kris Holm**, Water Resources NW; **Heather Kibbey**, Pierce County; **Bill Leif**, Snohomish County; **Julie Lowe**, Ecology; **Doug Navetski**, King County; **Daniel Nidzgorski**, Jefferson County; **Kit Paulsen**, Bellevue; **Tony Paulson**, USGS; **David Price**, WDFW; **Scott Redman**, Puget Sound Partnership; **Andy Rheaume**, Seattle; **Dan Smith**, Federal Way; **Heather Trim**, People for Puget Sound; **Jane Zimmerman**, Everett.

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COMMITTEE AGREES TO ROLE IN OVERSEEING PILOT PROJECTS

Pilot project leads are in the process of formalizing agreements with Ecology. In addition to providing a status report to be included in the Consortium's report to the Legislature this fall, the Committee agreed that these projects should also be evaluated based on the criteria for which they were chosen, *e.g.* the ability to leverage funds and bring more entities into each of the projects. The committee agreed that periodic open meetings where status, results, and preliminary findings are presented would provide an opportunity for two-way feedback and be an appropriate and effective way for consortium members to keep apprised of the projects' progress toward achieving coordination goals.

COMMITTEE LEARNS ABOUT PUGET SOUND PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO DESIGNING AN ECOSYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAM

Scott Redman described the process for developing monitoring-related components of the Puget Sound Action Agenda and the Partnership's overall approach to implementing adaptive management. The Science Panel is developing a broad Strategic Science Plan organized around learning more about the ecosystem, how it works, and how it has changed and is changing; and understanding how management actions have affected the ecosystem in the past and how management actions might affect the ecosystem in the future. A monitoring work plan to address these questions and focus management actions on delivering improvements in ecosystem health is under development. Our capacity (understanding and resources) to address complex issues should increase over time.

Indicators of ecosystem health will drive future monitoring efforts. NOAA Fisheries is leading the effort to select indicators; in the first phase they are working from existing data, and a second later phase will look at other possible indicators to better reflect ecosystem recovery objectives and fill knowledge gaps. These indicators will be used to report progress on ecosystem recovery efforts. There might be a mix of indicators that are most useful for communicating to the public and those that are most useful for influencing management actions. Roll-ups, or synthetic indicators based on a broad data set, might also be used. Benchmarks need to be set to measure progress and potentially trigger changes in actions.

Both ecosystem monitoring (status and trends, effectiveness, validation) and implementation monitoring (compliance, accountability) will be incorporated into an Action Agenda that is revised, per statute, at least every two years. The current approach and timeline for developing the monitoring plan starts with identifying objectives and evaluation questions that are relevant to priorities. Overall monitoring study design and strategies will take awhile, but conceptual models, and appropriate scales and boundaries are being determined now. For the coming biennium not much is expected to change. For the next biennium there will be more definition. The monitoring plans both in the Action Agenda and the state agency budget requests for monitoring will be submitted to the legislature through the Washington Forum on Monitoring.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSES WAYS TO ENGAGE IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE MONITORING PLAN

In June and July, Partnership staff directed by the Science Panel will be establishing monitoring objectives related to the six topics (water quantity, water quality, habitat and land use, species and biodiversity, human health, and quality of life). Steve Ralph, a consultant to the Partnership, and Ken Currens, on loan to the Partnership from NWIFC, will work from the Topic Forum papers and the comments submitted on those papers to identify and infer specific objectives for monitoring. The Consortium would like to create a means for its members and the Partnership to work together to articulate these questions, perhaps via a series of topical meetings with Partnership staff. Consortium membership would need to be expanded to address all six topics.

A possibility exists that the first work of a new Coordinated Monitoring and Assessment Program that is created by the Consortium would be implementing the Action Agenda's identified process of developing the monitoring plan.

COMMITTEE AGREES TO BROAD SCOPE AND PROCESS FOR FORMING STORMWATER WORK GROUP

The Committee agrees that:

- Stormwater extends beyond water quality issues to other topics: it is an important driver/pathway in nearly every conceptual model being developed by the indicators work group for the six Partnership topics.
- This Work Group will address stormwater in a manner that is inclusive of water quality, habitat and human health. It will not be limited to addressing Municipal NPDES permit issues; it will include other types of permittees and also the full range of local jurisdictions and land uses from rural to urban.
- The new Work Group will keep an eye on the big picture while focusing on identifying what monitoring needs to be done to ensure that we reduce harm from stormwater.
- The new Work Group will be a test case for governance for coordinated monitoring and assessment and changing the current business model.
- The Work Group will not be *ad hoc*; it will have clearly identified, diverse membership and include key entities not currently represented in this Committee.

- The Work Group will consider whether to have both technical and policy committees, similar to the way PSAMP is currently structured.
- A “core” group will be identified to draft initial work group scope and membership.

NEXT STEPS

Today’s conversations will be continued at this coming Friday’s Governance Committee meeting. The Committee agrees that we have a unique opportunity to channel our energy into creating a new and different way to do things more meaningfully and thoughtfully. We wish to convey our appreciation for this opportunity to the Governance Committee and recognize that our challenge is to hone in on strategies and processes that can work within the timeline that the Partnership is up against.

Based on today’s discussion, the composition of a Stormwater Work Group and “core” group will be agreed upon at Friday’s Governance Committee meeting. The “core” group will be tasked with writing a new scope and defining a specific list of Work Group members, and drafting a work plan and meeting schedule. The Consortium will also consider on Friday whether to identify other appropriate work groups to acknowledge or create in support of developing a coordinated approach to monitoring.

The Partnership will work with the Consortium to convene conversations with stakeholders around identifying the objectives for the Puget Sound Monitoring Plan.