

Watershed Groups Review August 21, 2014

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DESIRED OUTCOME:

The ECB will be briefed about the purpose and anticipated process for the watershed groups review for the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) recommendations due to the State Legislature by December 1, 2014. Additionally, staff will discuss how the ECB and/or their constituents can be involved in this work.

BACKGROUND:

Over the past several decades a number of legislative and regional efforts have created local watershed groups to address issues such as water quantity/quality, salmon recovery, and ecosystem recovery. Some of these groups include salmon recovery Lead Entities (77.85.050 RCW), Local Integrating Organizations (derived from 90.71.260 RCW), Marine Resources Committees (and the associated Northwest Straits Commission (Public Law 105-384, Title IV), Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (77.95.060 RCW), and the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (90.88 RCW and others).

During the 2014 state legislative session, Senators Ranker and Rolfes introduced Senate Bill 6381. The bill directed the Puget Sound Partnership to review watershed based groups and to make recommendations to the Legislature on how to improve watershed groups' contributions to Puget Sound recovery. The bill did not pass out of the Senate, but the main intent of the bill was captured in a proviso to the Puget Sound Partnership's 2015 Supplemental Budget.

The full text of the proviso states:

(3) \$71,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2015 is provided solely for the Puget Sound Partnership to collaborate with interested parties to review the roles of local watershed and salmon recovery organizations implementing the action agenda and provide legislative, budgetary, and administrative recommendations to streamline and strengthen Puget Sound recovery efforts. In conducting this work, the partnership must coordinate with the following interested parties: The Hood Canal coordinating council, marine resources committees, including the Northwest straits initiative, regional fisheries enhancement groups, local integrating organizations, lead entities, and other county watershed councils, as well as representatives of federal, state, tribal, and local government agencies. Recommendations must be provided to the appropriate legislative committees by December 1, 2014.

To gather data, provide analysis and support for this work, the Partnership contracted with Ross Strategic (Ross). Ross will conduct an independent, third party review of the different watershed groups in the Sound and make recommendations to streamline and strengthen recovery efforts. Ross will submit their final report by November 21 and the Partnership will use this information to make recommendations to the Legislature by December 1.

In conducting their work, Ross will use a four part approach.

- Review of available documentation related to each group (charters, strategic plans, work plans, etc.)
- Conduct interviews with 10 or 11 individuals to help properly define and structure the work (especially the questions for the interviews and survey below)
- Conduct interviews with an additional 20 individuals
- Conduct an online survey to gather broad feedback into the process

The data from all four sources above will be coded and entered into the online tool Dedoose. This will provide a level of transparency and access to the data collected that is then used as a basis for their analysis.

ACTION AGENDA CONSISTENCY:

Ensuring an efficient and effective network of implementers for salmon and ecosystem recovery is a critical role for PSP to enable the success of the Action Agenda even though this body of work is not specifically called for in the Action Agenda.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT:

This issue has previously been introduced to the ECB and Leadership Council. The Partnership engaged representatives from some of the group of focus in this review: Doug Osterman (WRIA 9), Karen Stewart (Stillaguamish-Snohomish Local Integrating Organization), and Ginny Broadhurst (Northwest Straits Initiative) in the review of contract bids and contract selection.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

No recommendations warranted at this time

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY:

This work is beginning now and moving on a fast schedule. If the ECB is not briefed on this in August, the work will be almost complete by the next meeting in November.

NEXT STEPS:

The Leadership Council will be briefed in September and the work will move forward toward an October 31 draft report from Ross; final report by November 21; and Partnership recommendations to the Legislature by December 1.

ATTACHMENTS:

None