

THE
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The Shared Strategy for Puget Sound: A Description and Initial Assessment of Collaborative Salmon Recovery Planning in Western Washington State

As of June 2008

This Report was prepared by the following individuals under the auspices of the William D. Ruckelshaus Center at the request of NOAA Fisheries.

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Guide for Readers Using this Report

This report is arranged in four sections, each for a different audience or purpose.

Abstract—two pages to provide an overview, noting the intended value of the study.

Short Summary—a 9 page summary descriptions of primary features and lessons.

Policy Makers' Summary—41 page summary that outlines key organizational features, operational philosophy and conflict resolution mechanisms; identifies how conflicting levels of government and other institutions were brought together, including governance and roles; and describes how a stable regional planning and implementation system was developed, including a summary of criticisms and gaps. This summary is for policy officials and senior staff from government, nonprofits, and advocacy groups who are interested in the process and want to glean lessons that could be applied in other settings. It might also be useful for students and others who are seeking an efficient way to review the important features, ingredients and lessons of such an undertaking.

Full Report—139 pages of complete description of the inception, development, tools and structures, interactions, challenges, criticisms, leadership and observations about key principles and lessons. This is prepared for staff or leadership of other efforts of similar scale, complexity and purpose in order to see the detailed challenges and requirements for overcoming such challenges.

This comprehensive section is also provided for the benefit of scholars and other researchers who may engage in comparative studies of similar approaches to such resource management challenges, or who may wish to study the workings and performance of the follow-on Puget Sound Partnership. This comprehensive section describes many of the small details that are often important in establishing and operating a complex dispute resolution system.

Each section is intended to be read on its own, and each successive section captures more detail, so there will be some repetition among them, particularly between the Policy Makers Summary and the Full Report.

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The Shared Strategy for Puget Sound: A Description and Initial Assessment

Abstract

June 30, 2008

In March of 1999, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) designated the Puget Sound Chinook salmon as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Even before the ESA listing was announced, anticipation of the ruling caused regional and community leaders to consider how an ESA-mandated salmon recovery effort could succeed, given the complicated and often fractious history surrounding salmon-related issues in the region, as well as the geographic, ecological, and economic diversity of the Puget Sound area.

The listing was ultimately a catalyzing event that caused federal, state and local government agencies, tribal governments, environmental groups, businesses, and farming interests to evaluate what they stood to lose or gain under a traditional top-down ESA approach. Despite significant mutual mistrust in some cases, and despite the complexities involved, most of the parties affected by the ESA listing were ultimately open to a collaborative, locally-led approach to salmon recovery planning as a way to avoid the default option—federal imposition of a recovery plan. NOAA was also open to the idea because it was almost certain to be sued and face opposition if it proposed a plan without the substantial involvement of the affected parties and a plan that was considered realistic to implement.

The result was the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound, a collaborative salmon recovery planning effort in Puget Sound that spanned roughly from 1999 to 2007, producing a NOAA-approved salmon recovery plan and a structure for implementing the plan.

Our research suggests that the Shared Strategy significantly increased the regional capacity to address policy making, funding, action, coordination, and decision making related to salmon recovery. Further, it is notable for its innovative combination of tools, strategies, and guiding principles, which together have contributed to its considerable successes. This can be of use to policy makers and community leaders as they address other vexing issues that cross geographic, political, ideological, economic, and environmental lines.

The full report details the history of the effort, the Shared Strategy infrastructure, its key features and key participants, and the results seen so far.¹ It also offers a preliminary

¹ The report does not address the biological results of the Shared Strategy, which will not be known for several decades, nor does it seek to independently address the scientific adequacy of the salmon recovery

assessment of how well it met its objectives before it was absorbed in 2007 into the Puget Sound Partnership, a broader regional environmental recovery effort regarding the Sound. Finally, the report discusses lessons that can be gleaned from this effort for further evaluation and possible use in other complex natural resource and other policy settings where conflict resolution, policy development and managerial tools are needed in a setting with multiple constituencies, sources of authority and regulation, and a history of conflict.

According to supporters and critics alike, even though the efficacy of the recovery plan itself will not be known for decades and important gaps remain, the development of the Shared Strategy structure, process, and plan ranks as one of the most sophisticated recent achievements in addressing large scale policy conflicts in the context of building and operating a sustainable conflict resolution and policy making system that spans all levels of government and every kind of economic, political, social, and professional boundary.

plan. Rather, it focuses on the development and efficacy of the conflict resolution and institutional development strategies and mechanisms that resulted in an approved salmon recovery plan, an implementation structure, and greatly increased funding.

Short Summary of Insights from the Shared Strategy Regarding Resolution and Management of Conflict over Natural Resource Management

June 30, 2008

This introductory portion of the report identifies a short list of particularly salient features of the Shared Strategy process, the large, multi-year effort to develop a voluntary, locally driven salmon recovery plan for the Puget Sound area of Washington State in response to the 1999 Endangered Species listing of Puget Sound Chinook salmon. This section highlights a number of unique or particularly creative mechanisms or adaptations that contributed to the success of this work and may have particular value in addressing other complex natural resource conflicts and challenges. These factors, along with other important observations in the vein of lessons learned, are more fully explained in the Policy Maker's Summary and further detailed in the Full Report. Criticisms and remaining challenges are described in those sections as well.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of the process was the overall strategy to overcome the large scale mistrust and balkanization of resources, authority, and priorities and turn it all into a coordinated regional effort across 14 watersheds in northwest Washington State. From the vantage point of a small group of concerned leaders, salmon recovery was possible only if it were driven and governed in a unified way by those in the watersheds, affected communities, and communities of interest, with regulatory and policy authorities as partners who carried out the salmon recovery responsibilities. While the process and the result were not perfect, and could not have been, the result is highly significant and accounts for the extensive salmon recovery plan, implementation structure, broad political support, funding, and relative unity that the work now enjoys.

At first, personal trust and relationships among concerned leaders were used to bring people to the table— prior to a workable approach being developed. This was done initially through the reputation of well-known and trusted leaders like former Governor Evans, Bill Ruckelshaus, Billy Frank, Ron Sims, Chris Endresen, Ralph Munro, and others. Next, the involvement of these leaders in a careful effort to build confidence over several years helped recruit others to the initial discussions to build an agreement among a wider group from the region on how to carry out salmon recovery planning, and then recruit a broadening coalition of regional leaders from all affected constituencies to the regional and local leadership committees that would oversee planning and implementation. The agreement to have a literal “Shared Strategy” also provided for a small coordinating staff to coordinate and develop the “shared” aspects, including common principles and approaches for planning, share information, support the regional committees, and coordinate with the governmental and tribal regulatory entities. These early

leaders and the staff initiated many of the initial accomplishments and policy ideas that would allow a Shared Strategy to credibly emerge and the diverse constituencies to develop confidence in the system.

This arc—from a small core of hopeful and committed leaders, and thousands of skeptics, to a broad and well-structured regional coalition that included thousands of interested and active local and regional leaders and front line workers and volunteers—was not traveled by luck or accident, but by deliberate and careful steps: by beginning with the end in mind. These steps merit examination and, in appropriate circumstances of resource management and conflict resolution, emulation.

The staff, in the first portion of the arc, began to “borrow” the reflected authority of the initial cadre of prominent leaders and created on-the-ground, day-to-day leadership and progress. This strategy worked under the charter of (limited) authority granted to this central staff by the Port Ludlow agreement (Port Ludlow is a waterfront resort and meeting place in the Puget Sound region where the two primary meetings took place to search for a unified regional approach to salmon recovery approach). From that agreement, these early leaders and the staff, carefully and, under the governance and in consultation with the several decision and advisory forums agreed to in the Port Ludlow Agreement, purposefully established a widening coalition of regional and local leaders, and constituted the collective planning and decision forums, resources, and processes that would be needed. Their efforts to do so, and the structure and relationships that were established are described in detail in the Full Report, and summarized in the Policy Makers Summary. This material will provide insight into approaches for assembling a governance and implementation structure out of a previously polarized set of communities of interest in a complex, multi-jurisdictional, multi-regulatory environment.

In the next stage of development, after several years of working to develop and maintain trust—not just of the staff, but to build trust among previously warring constituencies and within a workable and transparent regional and local decision making and planning structure—the leadership energy, initiative, and momentum shifted from the cadre of initial regional leaders and central staff to the regional and local leaders who joined the major decision and advisory forums. The final stage in completing the arc, as the regional salmon recovery plan was produced and then accepted by NOAA in 2006 was a further shifting of initiative and energy to leadership dominated by the watersheds themselves, whether within the watershed planning groups, or as members of the regional governance and strategy groups. While regional activities to coordinate policy, resources, and priorities remained important, formally established watershed planning groups, where actual recovery would have to take place, became, where they had not been already, the primary drivers. And they became so, not as 14 individual watersheds, but as a group that could share goals, work together, and seek resources and policy change from a position of thoughtful planning and unity, and thereby affect state and federal policy and set regional priorities.

By the time of NOAA's acceptance of the plan in 2006, these watershed entities had, in most instances, greatly improved capacity as a result of the previous six years of effort, including much greater use of science, measurable goals, common priorities, more uniform access to policy makers, problem solving, and resources, and far more structured and effective local decision making and project management capacity. This commitment, infrastructure, and leadership energy at the local levels, coordinated by collective regional leadership that included representatives of each watershed, became the driving engine of salmon recovery. Some watersheds were better prepared than others, but all were far more prepared to carry this on than eight years earlier. Now a regional structure, coordinated with state agencies, tribal governments, the Governor, and the legislature, and with the federal regional presence, could help gain and distribute resources according to priorities and in consultation with scientific resources to support the work at the watershed level.

This brief section summarizes some of the main ingredients in developing and managing this process of transformation.

1. Invest to clearly understand the relevant history and institutions

The early work to examine and understand the history and roles of the institutions involved in Puget Sound Salmon recovery was crucial to understanding the old arguments and solutions that had been attempted or considered and what resources, knowledge, successes, and commitments existed that could be used to develop a serious recovery strategy in response to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing. Several years of up-front investment of time and subsequent intensive consultation and inclusion of many ideas, leaders, and entities that might otherwise have been ignored were a major reason for the initial tolerance and acceptance of a regional effort, later avoidance of fatal errors, and for many subsequent successes. Early investment in understanding the history of the affected and involved parties is a pre-requisite to building an effective new structure for policy and conflict resolution. Doing so takes time and patience often not accorded attempts to resolve large, long standing disputes.

2. Adopt an inclusive approach; protect, rather than reduce rights of parties

Efforts to bring together polarized parties are likely to be more successful if no party is asked as a pre-condition to give up existing rights or authority. Often, participants or conveners beginning a conflict resolution process seek to impose restrictive pre-conditions, creating resistance to participation. Thus, the early (but debated) principle guiding the formation of the Shared Strategy process, that no state, federal, or tribal entity would be asked to give up statutory or treaty-granted powers was crucial to gaining participation. Many parties later agreed to a significant reduction in their independent exercise of rights and authority and to coordination and resource sharing, which would not have been possible by imposing pre-conditions. Seeking to limit or remove rights or authority at the beginning of a process often results in mistrust that is more difficult to overcome and may preclude some key constituencies from participating.

3. Non-traditional agency posture regarding regulatory action and incentives

In a conflict resolution process seeking to overcome long standing disputes or impasses, the role of a regulatory agency such as NOAA or the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, among others, requires a balance that is not typical to traditional regulatory postures. After establishing key parameters, the needed role is one of a knowledgeable participant who can also contribute to the effort certain special resources and authority that can help spur and support the agreed upon direction. NOAA set the stage with the endangered species listing, retained approval authority, and provided the primary scientific resources and standard setting to live up to its regulatory mandate, but during the process did not play a regulatory role, threaten action, or preemptively veto any approach. Other federal and state regulatory entities played this balancing role as well. Key features of the structure and process of Shared Strategy, as well as important informal interactions, supported these important behaviors. The Policy Work Group, discussed later in the document, is one important feature that helped regulatory agencies play a valued, but less traditional role, taking advantage of expertise, but avoiding old conflicts.

4. Deploy trusted leaders as potential “conveners,” and work to evolve individual trust into trust of a workable process and institutions

A range of recognized regional leaders are crucial to establishing the needed credibility and gaining initial involvement when a resource management situation is contentious as was the salmon recovery and ESA response in Puget Sound. To translate these symbolic commitments and personal involvements into an established and effective process, recognize the importance of then building an infrastructure that merits trust and reflects the initial values and commitments these leaders brought to the table, combined with forums and processes that fit the issues at hand. People like Evans, Ruckelshaus, Frank, Sims, Endresen, and Munro and helped gain the involvement of the crucial tribal, state and local governments, business, and agricultural constituencies while retaining the trust of state and federal officials. The reputations of these leaders—and the symbolism of their commitment—attracted other regional leaders and convinced local leaders that this effort was not business as usual. These leaders and the staff then helped build the needed institutions to supplement, link and otherwise support existing agencies, authorities, planning groups, and mechanisms. Because of this careful progression, the credibility of the system and its accomplishments became the key to a successful plan and transition to the implementation phase. Building from the work of the initial leaders through the establishment of the more formal decision making infrastructure took a number of years, and required that the agency both let these leaders explore and then build on the possibilities unfettered by agency views, ensuring that the agency was informed and had appropriate involvement.

5. Written agreements to increase clarity and confidence; personal contact to maintain trust

Clarification and memorialization avoids later confusion and displays to participants’ sponsors

and others the agreements and related mutual commitments that have been made. The agreement at Port Ludlow provided the blueprint for how the planning process would work and captured the commitments of key leaders and major agencies and jurisdictions to participate, as well as how the process would be governed and supported. This was, in effect, the “constitution” for the effort, and something that could be shown and referred to in the early months and years, before the new arrangements became a habit, and trust sufficiently evolved. The Shared Strategy also kept written records of the many local and regional meetings and decisions and a very substantial amount of this material was on its website. The two volume regional Shared Strategy plan, encompassing the 14 watershed plans and related additional issues, represents the overall compilation of what they agreed collectively to do. Having these records of agreement compelled the discussions to a point of closure as the parties worked to express clearly what they have agreed to.

A focus on building trust and relationships was a necessity to overcome the years of mistrust. So, the formal meetings and written agreements were not enough. It was also important to avoid surprises and major errors. Frequent informal interactions and a set of smaller committees and working groups allowed most proposals to be vetted well before being surfaced for more public consideration or decisions and for unsuspected issues to arise for consideration. The staff played a key role in managing these interactions and agenda setting activities.

6. Create broad-based awareness and support

The effort to involve or inform those not directly involved with the Shared Strategy created an awareness of the effort and its breadth, but also helped mitigate opposition and build political and financial support with those less directly involved or affected, but who had a potential interest or could materially affect the outcome. As one example, the business community played a number of important roles: A business community member sat on the Shared Strategy board of directors and contributions from businesses helped fund events and activities related to salmon recovery, particularly in the early planning phases before there was sufficient progress to garner public and foundation funding. Because of these involvements, business leaders knew, and could have input into, the essentials of the salmon recovery work, although rarely was it sought at a detailed level, so they were not surprised or concerned later at the substantial allocation of resources or policy impacts of the salmon recovery plan. Elected officials were kept informed and they and other leaders from the local, state, federal, and regional levels were briefed and invited to participate at critical times—well before any legislation would be sought. Highly focused web communication was used to track progress and invite comment, as were constant local gatherings, and two prominent regional “Salmon Summits,” which involved hundreds of people. Ultimately, it would have been almost impossible for anyone interested or involved in salmon recovery or natural resource policy issues in Puget Sound to be unaware of the Shared Strategy. This work to understand, at early stages, concerns of, and build awareness among, business and governmental leaders, as well as

natural resource professionals, concerned citizens, and property owners helped the staff and leadership learn of concerns and issues, and to avert or mitigate later potential opposition.

7. Consider choosing a non-authoritative entity to coordinate the effort; recognize the centrality of having a locus of leadership that is seen as unbiased by history or position. In this, as in many other conflict situations, **none of the existing entities have the combination of authority, knowledge, and trust to be the convener of such a complex and potentially controversial undertaking.** Although there were many highly competent groups of professionals within various agencies, tribes, and elsewhere, no existing entity could have played this convening and leadership role, and no new powerful entity could have been created in the climate of mistrust that existed, or given the needed degree of authority. A leadership center was needed that would not compete with, but could somehow include in new ways the existing expertise and authority. The Shared Strategy coordinating staff (which rarely exceeded six people) had only as much authority as it could earn or assert without alienating the Shared Strategy participants. By providing good service, helping to resolve previously intractable conflicts, helping watershed groups and others obtain resources and achieve progress, helping agencies contribute expertise and achieve their mission, by behaving in a transparent manner, and otherwise showing results, the Shared Strategy staff, and particularly the Executive Director, Jim Kramer, developed considerable independent influence and impact, and, thereby, the authority needed to accomplish the massive leadership and coordinating task. As noted, this was accomplished by exerting strong direction in the early stages as the system was built, and then following the arc to return a renewed, unified, and newly structured leadership ability to the regional and local leaders.

The staff's only authority came from the memorandum of agreement that emerged in 2000 from the seminal meetings at Port Ludlow. Hence, a non-authoritative coordinator, with no previous institutional history may be an important component to success in such a polarized situations where the needed authority and resources were fragmented among levels and jurisdictions, even when competent expertise may exist in established entities. But harking back to paragraph 1, understanding and respecting the history and existing competence, and involving those entities, as was done here, is an equally important ingredient.

8. Gain support of key “sponsors” regarding the process for policy resolution **Often overlooked in the drive towards consensus among directly affected parties is the support of legitimate sources of authority—“sponsoring” organizations such as NOAA, tribes, the governor, and the state legislature.** In this case, there would have been little incentive for watershed groups to participate if NOAA had not expressed its commitment to taking the plan seriously or if it was not anticipated that the state and federal governments would put some resources into any agreed-upon and approved recovery plan. These sponsors must at least assent to the process proposed for resolution if the result is to have a chance for acceptance.

9. Equalize resources

Recognize and address the disparities in capacity and resources among the participants. A major challenge was the differences in technical and financial capacity among the watersheds. In the end, disparity in technical staff and related capacity for data collection and analysis and

plan development may be one of the largest factors accounting for quality differences and a large proportion of the concern and conflict over plan adequacy. The Technical Recovery Team and the Shared Strategy staff did significant work to provide technical assistance across the watersheds, but this was not sufficient to overcome resource and capacity differences and deficits in the system. Providing expertise to equalize these disparities would be valuable for similar future efforts.

10. Use science, metrics, and data

Using scientific methods for setting goals and other specific measures of progress helped avoid a least-common-denominator approach to goal setting and avoided the application of primarily political criteria to decisions. Often forgotten in discussions of collaborative problem solving is the importance of goals and measurements; the Shared Strategy was attentive to the importance of concrete goals and related measures, both for long-term progress and because ongoing interest of sponsors and securing funding depended on visible results. Ensuring reasonable attention to the science behind the goals was a key function of NOAA as the primary regulatory agency and helped them play a key portion of the regulatory role in a non-traditional manner. However, in this case, the science team had significant interaction with those involved in the planning, contributing to the better use of the science.

The use of science in the Shared Strategy process merits emulation. Key features of this approach were:

- Using an independent team of scientists likely to have credibility with policy makers.
- Placing the science team where decisions would be made about plan acceptance, but where the team also would get exposure to local knowledge and considerations through interaction and observation.
- Formally adopting the goals by the policy entities close to the issues and responsible for solutions, but remaining heavily influenced by the science.
- Gaining consistency by having the science team provide or oversee technical assistance to the 14 watersheds, including production of a planning template to show what elements should be included in watershed plans.
- Having the science team that advised on the goals also review and comment on the plans prior to final submission in an effort to improve the adequacy of the plans.
- Safeguarding scientific independence by, among other things, leaving the scientists in scientific roles and the policy makers in their roles.

11. Structure roles and responsibilities to ensure balance and a new outcome

Overall, the structure and roles of the various forums and functions in the Shared Strategy process redefined the relationships among agencies, jurisdictions, tribes, and many other interested and affected parties so they could work together in a new way around what would be a new approach to salmon recovery. To enable parties with disparate interests and many with long standing conflicts in approach to work together productively and effectively, the Shared Strategy divided roles and responsibilities in a way that would ensure all primary parties

access to the full range of issues and decisions, and also ensure balance and tap into each party's strengths. While respect was shown for existing authorities and prerogatives, a different way of organizing, deciding, and interacting over policies and actions affecting salmon recovery was put in place.

12. Maintain continuity and quality of leadership

In order to carry forward concerns, keep agreements and apply lessons learned; a complex effort like this requires continuity of leadership and institutional knowledge. Reflecting this, many of those involved in planning the Port Ludlow meetings—and the signatory organizations to the Port Ludlow agreements—later became involved in the planning and governance structure, including the Policy Work Group, the Technical Recovery Team, the Development Committee/Recovery Council, and the board of directors. Continuity can also be found in the transition from the Shared Strategy structure and representation to the follow-on Puget Sound Partnership (PSP).

13. Understand the political realities but avoid destabilizing or policy-diluting politics

To create a credible, effective, and scientifically supportable plan, the Shared Strategy effort had to be as free from politics as possible, but the plan also had to be developed in a political context with policy input, support, participation, and funding from elected and appointed officials. The Shared Strategy followed several rules to both respect the policy role of elected officials and keep out inappropriate political considerations and pressures. First, elected leaders were included and treated with respect. Second, the governance system was transparent and included strong leaders from all constituencies, including elected and appointed officials. Third, the use of scientific standards and designation of NOAA as the final approver also reduced the impact of politics. Fourth, when forming approaches to policy questions, the Shared Strategy staff took potential political reactions into account, and was able to work around potential obstacles to good policy.

The Policy Maker's Summary and the Full Report detail what happened, providing specifics of how these complex and delicate structures and actions were determined, assembled, and carried out. The work done in the Shared Strategy, despite gaps (known to both critics and to principals) that will be identified in this report, brought together, created, and applied techniques to the development of problem solving mechanisms that merit emulation and study for use in other large and complex regional natural resource challenges. The increasingly detailed sections that follow attempt to make a contribution by capturing and evaluating these details while documents and recent memory are still readily accessible.

Many kinds of natural resource and other policy problems have challenges similar to those found in salmon recovery in Puget Sound: They involve multiple levels of authority from tribal, federal, state, city, county, and special districts; multiple interests of landowners, environmentalists, and developers, and where no unified or recognized forum or method of

decision making, applying science, or setting priorities exists. They are characterized by governance and authority alignments that pre-date or may have contributed to the problem that needs solution.

Therefore, in circumstances that require a means to integrate the needed energies and authorities, and overcome traditional problems, barriers, and rivalries, it appears that much can be learned from the work done in Puget Sound in the latter years of the 20th century and in the early part of this century to learn to work in new ways on salmon recovery and to build a decision making and implementation infrastructure that crosses all of the usual barriers to progress that are present when environmental and economic issues clash. The biological result will not be known for many years; when it is, this report can be re-examined to see what helped gain success, or what precluded it. But for now, much can be learned, and certainly built on for attempting to address natural resource management, land use, and other issues that resist traditional solutions and institutional arrangements.

Despite the limitations and legitimate criticisms and outstanding questions surrounding it, the work of the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound deserves review and examination by agencies seeking solutions to long standing or new problems that defy solution by normal processes, and by other leaders frustrated by the failure of the tools at their individual command, or traditionally a part of the political or policy making process. It shows many of the better ways to think, organize for action and to act on such problems, reflecting new methods and structures, as well as creative adaptations of principles that have worked elsewhere or on smaller scales. For those wishing to know more, the authors commend to their attention the following Policy Makers' Summary or the Full Report.

The Shared Strategy for Puget Sound: A Description and Initial Assessment

Policy Makers' Summary

June 30, 2008

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Introduction

This document offers an overview and preliminary assessment of the developmental, structural, conflict resolution-related, governance, and managerial aspects of the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound, a collaborative salmon recovery planning effort in Puget Sound in northwest Washington state that spanned roughly from 1999 to 2007. Given the varied results of past endangered species recovery efforts², the Shared Strategy merits examination for useful approaches and lessons that could be applied to other complex and controversial resource management efforts.³

Our research suggests that the Shared Strategy significantly increased the regional capacity to address policy-making, funding, action, coordination, and decision making related to salmon recovery.⁴ Further, the Shared Strategy is notable for its innovative combination of tools, strategies, and guiding principles, which together have contributed to its considerable successes addressing natural resource policy conflicts and management. This can be of use to policy makers, community leaders, and researchers as they address other vexing issues that cross geographic, political, ideological, economic, and environmental lines, such as transportation, water issues, farmland preservation, air quality, and healthcare.

The implementation and problem-solving infrastructure created by the Shared Strategy has been bequeathed to the successor effort, the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), which has broadened the scope of this regional collaboration to encompass other ecosystem issues in the Puget Sound. While many challenges remain, and the results are not certain, the establishment of this problem solving and policy making infrastructure is a major accomplishment and the principles and actions that led to it contain valuable insights.

² Jonathan M. Hoekstra, J. Alan Clark, William F. Fagan, and P. Dee Boersma. "A Comprehensive Review of Endangered Species Act Recovery Plans." *Ecological Applications*, Vol. 12, No. 3; pp. 630-640. June 2002.

³ This report is focused on what can be learned about developing natural resource policy and management mechanisms by examining the work of the Shared Strategy effort in Puget Sound. It does not attempt to second guess or evaluate NOAA's acceptance of the salmon recovery plan, or otherwise evaluate the scientific quality of the watershed plans. The biological results of the Shared Strategy salmon recovery plan will not be known for several decades and any evaluation of the biological adequacy of the plan would require a different type of review.

⁴ The descriptions in this report draw from more than 100 focused conversations (including 60 formal interviews) with Shared Strategy participants and close observers, attendance at dozens of meetings of the Shared Strategy planning and decision-making bodies (including some watershed groups), extensive examination of Shared Strategy reports and archives, and examination of dozens of other examples of resource recovery in the Northwest and elsewhere in the country.

Salmon Recovery in Puget Sound: The Challenges

In March of 1999, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) designated the Puget Sound Chinook salmon as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Even before the ESA listing was announced, anticipation of the ruling caused regional and community leaders to consider how an ESA-mandated salmon recovery effort could succeed or would affect them, given the complicated and often fractious history surrounding salmon-related issues in the region, the geographic, ecological, and economic diversity of the Puget Sound area, and the history of federal imposition of recovery plans.⁵

The listing was ultimately a catalyzing event that caused government agencies, environmental groups, tribes, businesses, and farming interests to evaluate what they stood to lose or gain under a traditional top-down ESA approach. Section 4 (f) of the ESA places responsibility on the listing agency, in this case NOAA, for developing and implementing a recovery plan for the listing species. However, state and local governments typically hold land use and water management authority due to the impact on habitat on which listed species depend. Therefore, it was generally seen as in the best interest of NOAA and the listed species to work with all of the agencies and stakeholders that had the ability to impact the situation. Despite significant mutual mistrust in some cases, and despite the obvious complexities involved, most of the parties affected by the ESA listing were, ultimately, open to a collaborative, locally-led approach to salmon recovery planning as a way to avoid the default option—federal imposition of a recovery plan. NOAA was also open to the idea because the agency was almost certain to be sued if it proposed a recovery plan objected to by affected parties, leading to an uncertain result, and possibly a substantial lack of action. However, finding a structure and set of policy-making mechanisms that would attract sufficient support was by no means assured. Worth noting is the fact that NOAA was not sued during the tenure of Shared Strategy.

At the local level, one of the earliest responses to the ESA listing was a multi-jurisdictional effort undertaken by three counties (King, Pierce, and Snohomish) in the Puget Sound region. It ultimately proved too geographically limited to address region-wide salmon recovery, but the Tri-County Salmon Recovery Effort provided an early testing ground for many of the collaborative structures and innovative strategies that later formed the basis of the Shared Strategy.⁶

⁵ Although three salmonid species—the Puget Sound Chinook, Hood Canal Summer Chum, and Bull Trout—were listed as threatened in March 1999, the Shared Strategy ultimately chose to focus solely on the recovery of Chinook salmon because other recovery efforts were already underway for the Hood Canal Summer Chum and Bull Trout.

⁶ The Shared Strategy also came to rely on several other early efforts at local collaboration on this issue—including tribal and state fisheries co-management and state watershed and salmon recovery planning legislation, which are detailed later in this report.

In light of the Tri-County effort's limitations and the largely unsuccessful record of imposed federal ESA solutions, a number of civic and community leaders initiated informal discussions about how to develop an effective regional response to the ESA listing. EPA founding administrator William Ruckelshaus, former Washington governor and Senator Daniel J. Evans, and Billy Frank, Jr., of the Nisqually Tribe, who headed the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC), were among the leaders who brought together disparate interests to share their concerns about the ESA listing and its potential impact.⁷

These informal discussions revealed that there was no existing entity with sufficient reach, expertise, or perceived neutrality that could oversee a collaborative regional salmon recovery effort—and no model available within the national public policy arena that could be directly applied. Something new and tailored to the region, its history, and institutions would be needed.

These leaders identified several key challenges around the salmon recovery issue—which also characterize many other policy areas:

- **Lack of coordinated authority to address the problem.** Regulatory power was spread among several federal, state, and local agencies with different missions and approaches. (See the interesting draft diagram prepared by the Puget Sound Action Team in May 2006 that illustrates the range of entities that could affect aspects of salmon recovery, contained in Appendix A.)
- **Regulatory power coming from different laws, and resources coming from several sources.** Coordination would be made more difficult by these divisions, which are found in many areas of policy making and resource management.
- **Existing conflicts and mistrust.** Major regional and local players had a history of conflict over the issue, often in the form of protracted legal, legislative, and public relations battles.
- **Lack of an adequate forum for cooperation.** No agency or forum was trusted to be an unbiased coordinating body, and no sanctioned or safe place existed where parties could take their concerns or ideas without significant risk, or where the needed expertise and authority could gather for effective problem solving or conflict resolution.
- **Knowledge gaps.** Access to reliable and mutually credible scientific resources was lacking, or the available scientific resources were insufficiently understood or used.

⁷ Many leaders in the region were involved in trying to craft a regional response. It would be impossible to completely and accurately identify all of them and their contributions, so we have included the names of those most frequently acknowledged and apologize to those not named or not named in proportion to their contribution.

It was through these discussions and common identification of these concerns that the idea for the Shared Strategy evolved (These deficits in problem solving capacity, forums, and leadership are common in many areas of natural resource policy.) As conceived in these early discussions, the Shared Strategy would facilitate the voluntary participation of key parties in developing a regional salmon recovery plan that NOAA would accept and would benefit farms, the economy, fish, and the environment. It would require the formation of a non-authoritative entity as the coordinating and leadership force, as well as a variety of structures and mechanisms to bring parties together at all levels and among levels. It would also need to build critical political momentum and trust over time.

Salmon Recovery in Puget Sound: The Historical Backdrop

Earlier activities relating to fisheries management, water resource planning, and salmon recovery provided building blocks for what later became the Shared Strategy.

Tribal Co-Management of Fisheries

An important pre-listing component of salmon recovery planning efforts in the Puget Sound region was two decades of tribal co-management of fisheries, which gave the tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) joint responsibility for planning and managing fisheries and hatchery programs. The beginnings of this relationship were difficult, and it took many years to develop a widely accepted process. The relatively advanced state of this relationship in 1998 appears to have contributed to constructive engagement following the ESA listing. In addition, there was a network of scientists and other professionals both in the tribes and in WDFW who had dealt with thorny issues of salmon management and recovery.

State Watershed and Salmon Recovery Legislation

The State of Washington passed three key pieces of legislation in the late 1990s in anticipation of the ESA listing: the Watershed Planning Act of 1998 (RCW 90.82, ESHB 2514), the Salmon Recovery Planning Act of 1998 (RCW 77.85, ESHB 2496), and the Salmon Recovery Funding Act of 1999 (RCW 77.85, 2ESSSB 5595). These became important building blocks for the Shared Strategy.

The Watershed Planning Act established a framework for local watershed-based groups to voluntarily come together for locally-driven water resource planning under state guidance and with state funding. The watershed plans were required to address water quantity issues and could also address water quality and habitat, as well as in-stream flows in rivers and streams. Although the act was not specifically directed at salmon habitat or the recovery of threatened salmon species, it addressed important factors that affect salmon health.

The Salmon Recovery Planning Act created the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO), which develops and coordinates an overall state salmon strategy. The Salmon Recovery Funding Act created the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRF Board), which allocates funds

appropriated by the State of Washington and the U.S. Congress for salmon habitat restoration projects.⁸ The initial projects funded by the SRF Board created an early and important emphasis on habitat restoration, local problem solving, on-the-ground projects, and rigorous scientific and policy evaluation.

Early Regional Leadership Meetings

Puget Sound leaders reacted to the expected ESA listing by holding a series of regional meetings to discuss its potential economic and social ramifications. They included a featured session at the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce's annual Leadership Conference in 1998, which was co-chaired by Christine Gregoire, then Washington's attorney general, and Ruckelshaus. The high-level discussions among elected officials and representatives of business and environmental groups confirmed that there was no obvious locus of responsibility for addressing all facets of the salmon issue—particularly because of extensive local land use and other policies, tribal authority over fishing, and other factors. These discussions also cemented the idea that failing to respond in a way that allowed the region to control its own destiny had risks that merited a widespread local effort to bring the region together in an unprecedented way.

This situation prompted Ruckelshaus to form and lead an informal working group of environmental and business leaders called the Puget Sound Business Environmental Forum, which sought a way for the region to create its own salmon recovery plan. The group met for most of 1998 but was unable to reach agreement on substantive action. It disbanded in 1999 when the Puget Sound Chinook, Hood Canal Summer Chum, and Bull Trout were formally designated as threatened under the ESA. Many members of this working group later became involved in the Shared Strategy.

Tri-County Salmon Recovery Effort

The Tri-County Salmon Recovery Effort, which had many features that were later incorporated into the Shared Strategy, involved three of the 12 Puget Sound counties: King County, Pierce County, and Snohomish County. The three county executives—Ron Sims (King), Doug Sutherland (Pierce), and Bob Drewel (Snohomish)—decided to take a proactive, cooperative approach to addressing the ESA listing Bull Trout and Chinook rather than wait for restrictions and mandates from the federal government.⁹

⁸ The six-member SRF Board is appointed by the governor and five state agency directors, and William Ruckelshaus served as the initial chair.

⁹ Bull Trout and Chinook were the only listed species with habitat within the tri-counties.

The three contiguous counties aimed to recognize shared impacts, coordinate governments in different jurisdictions with shared ecosystems, jointly seek funds and other support from the state and federal governments, and seek to demonstrate to NOAA that they could control their own destiny and still meet the ESA listing requirements. They also reached outside county government to environmental and agricultural groups, tribal governments, city governments, and others.

The Tri-County effort was a direct response to the ESA “4(d) rule,” which directs NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service to issue regulations to conserve species listed as threatened. The county executives were concerned about the possibility of endless lawsuits against local governments over policies such as wastewater and land use. Local business interests were also uncertain about the Section 4(d) rule’s consequences for regional economic growth. The Tri-County goal was to coordinate local salmon recovery efforts under a plan that, if approved by NOAA, would exempt the county governments from liability for incidental take of Chinook salmon in exchange for the protections that would be contained in an approved plan.

The three counties formed a collaborative working group that included more than 400 representatives of local, state, federal, and tribal governments and the business, environmental, agricultural, and forestry communities. Executive Sims became Chair and a passionate advocate of the recovery effort. Many of the tribes were at first unwilling to participate because, as sovereign nations, they were wary of entering into negotiations with local governments. But the support of tribal leaders such as Billy Frank, Jr. and David Troutt of the Nisqually Tribe, and Terry Williams of the Tulalip Tribe helped bring many tribes¹⁰ into the Tri-County process.

The working group developed a plan consisting of three early-action programs and three long-term action programs designed to protect and restore salmon habitat and to restore salmon populations to harvestable levels. An independent biological review of the plan found that the three early-action programs would primarily maintain existing habitat conditions or minimize the effects of development on salmon habitat but would not substantially improve degraded habitat. It also found that the plan omitted important implementation details.

¹⁰ This report recognizes that tribes are sovereign nations, and the references in this summary and in the full report generally use the term “tribes,” recognizing that not all tribes participated, not all tribes that were involved participated in the same way, and that no one leader speaks for tribes beyond their own, except as specifically designated by other tribes to do so. Generally, the term is used to describe what we understand to be the view or the position of a large segment of the tribes concerned with the salmon recovery effort, but we are not ascribing that view to all individual tribes. (In fact, some tribes remained outside of or dissatisfied with the Shared Strategy Process or plan.) Here again, it would be impossible to completely and accurately identify all of the tribes and their contributions, so we have included the names of those most frequently acknowledged and apologize to those not named or not named in proportion to their contribution.

NOAA responded positively to the counties' efforts but ultimately did not approve the plan. The Tri-County leaders also realized that their approach was too limited geographically and necessarily ignored factors in other parts of Puget Sound affecting the recovery of the species. Tri-County leaders ultimately concluded that their approach needed to be expanded and they would need the involvement of a well-respected senior statesman with the ability to engage and unite diverse interests across the broader Puget Sound region. Sims thus approached Ruckelshaus with the idea of taking salmon recovery efforts to the regional level.¹¹

NOAA and ESA Listings

Will Stelle, the NOAA regional administrator as the listing was being developed, and many former and current NOAA officials were aware of the history of conflict around ESA enforcement actions in Washington State, the bluntness of the tools available to the agency, and the poor national track record of federally-imposed plans for endangered species preservation. They realized that a substantial bottom-up plan developed by local watershed groups and coordinated by knowledgeable and sophisticated community leaders would have a better chance of being implemented than a top-down, federally-written plan. If an adequate plan could be developed locally, the agency would be interested.

During Stelle's tenure, the agency developed top-down initiatives, taking enforcement actions which, while controversial, many believe contributed to increased interest in collaboration over salmon recovery after the ESA listing. Stelle's strategy was apparently to demonstrate NOAA's willingness to enforce the law if voluntary recovery efforts were not forthcoming.

¹¹ Ruckelshaus was the founding Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the 1970s and is a well-known leader on using a balanced approach on environmental issues as well as a leader in business—in addition to being famous for his resistance to the Nixon administration's order to fire the Watergate special prosecutor, resulting in his resignation. He was a state legislator, state house majority leader, and deputy attorney general in Indiana earlier in his career, and later a corporate vice president and CEO of major U.S. companies. He worked as an attorney in high-profile law firms, and he returned to EPA during the Reagan administration, charged with restoring its reputation after some tarnishing by recent appointees of the administration. He has also played a leadership role in the Pacific Northwest, since coming back to this region, in negotiations between the U.S. and Canada on fishing rights. With his background, reputation, experience, and well-honed abilities in complex circumstances, Ruckelshaus had significant access to government and the business community, both regionally and nationally, and was widely respected among environmental groups and tribes. (He was less familiar to the farm community.) The sum of these factors represented an extraordinary asset to salmon recovery. Despite the several strong and respected leaders in the region who were helpful in this effort, perhaps no one else in the region had these combinations of traits.

Stelle's successor as regional director, Robert Lohn, maintained NOAA's stance of being willing to enforce but also supported a well-organized, broadly representative collaborative solution. Lohn became a central force in supporting and working with the regional effort that became the Shared Strategy.

Summary of Antecedent Efforts

These early actions pre-dating the ESA listing of Puget Sound Chinook were important relationship-building and learning experiences and in many ways set the stage for the Shared Strategy. The relationships formed between the tribes and the state under co-management, and among a number of local jurisdictions, tribes, and NOAA under the Tri-County process, helped convince those involved in salmon recovery throughout the region that a larger collective effort was possible. The Tri-County efforts also highlighted the limitations of any action that was not part of a broader regional strategy. The state legislation related to salmon recovery also created state and local relationships and funding structures that were later integrated into the Shared Strategy.

Formation of the Shared Strategy

Once the leadership and staff of the Tri-County effort recognized that their efforts would not be sufficient, Sims and others approached prominent community leaders such as Ruckelshaus, Evans, Frank, and Williams for help initiating a Puget Sound-wide collaborative process for salmon recovery planning.

Port Ludlow I Meeting

Ruckelshaus and Evans agreed to co-chair a regional meeting at Port Ludlow, a well known conference facility and resort located on Puget Sound, in October 1999 to introduce the idea of a locally-led strategy to other regional leaders and to issue a call to action for different interests to work together toward this goal. Jim Kramer, an independent consultant, Walter Reid of the Packard Foundation, and Dr. Mary Ruckelshaus of NOAA's Northwest Fisheries Science Center were closely involved in the planning and organization of the meeting.

The Port Ludlow meeting was officially titled the Puget Sound Salmon Leaders' Forum but later became known as the Port Ludlow I meeting because it was the first of two region-wide salmon recovery meetings held there. Attendees included approximately 140 people from local, state, federal, and tribal governments; business and environmental groups; the agriculture and fishing industries; and academia. Prominent leaders, including Governor Gary Locke and NOAA's Will Stelle, lent weight and credibility to the proceedings.

The meeting organizers drafted a proposal for managing Puget Sound salmon recovery as a starting point for discussion. It described their motivation for supporting a regional approach and how local participation and support would be critical to preserving and restoring salmon

habitat. This working document was refined as the ideas and actions forming Shared Strategy developed.

One of the major outcomes of the Port Ludlow I Meeting was a commitment from key attendees such as NOAA and NWIFC to take concrete steps toward designing and implementing a shared regional salmon recovery strategy. Such commitments, along with the attendance of a broad range of leaders from across the Sound, helped show that the effort was serious and had potential for success. The commitment of regional leaders and the foundation for the development of the Shared Strategy are reflected in the document “A Shared Strategy for the Recovery of Salmon in the Puget Sound.”¹²

Attendees stressed that the strategy should build on and support existing efforts and organizations rather than creating a new layer of formal bureaucracy. It was generally agreed that the goal of salmon recovery should be to meet the biological delisting criteria developed by NOAA, as well as recovering the species to harvestable and sustainable levels. Attendees agreed that science, not politics, should dictate the direction of the recovery strategy and that technical information and resources should be shared more widely across the region. Other major conclusions included the need for funding, increased public awareness and participation, and a regional forum to allow salmon leaders to work together.

Ruckelshaus and Evans agreed to host another regional meeting to ensure progress on commitments made at the first meeting and to identify additional actions at the regional level. In the interim, they agreed to convene a working group to develop recommendations for a regional salmon recovery coordination process that would be presented at the next regional meeting.

Proposal for a Shared Strategy

The working group included representatives of local, state, federal, and tribal governments and the business community. The group designated an ad hoc steering committee to lead the effort, which consisted of the following people:

- William Ruckelshaus, private citizen
- Donna Darm, Acting NOAA Regional Administrator
- Billy Frank, Jr., NWIFC Chairman
- Curt Smitch, Special Assistant to the Governor for Natural Resources
- Jeff Koenings, WDFW Director
- Gerry Jackson, USFWS, Western Washington Manager
- Ron Sims, King County Executive

¹² “A Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound.” October 17, 2000. The 2000 document was revised based on earlier documents. The final document is included in the appendix to this report.

- Chris Endresen, Kitsap County Commissioner

The group met regularly for more than a year (late 1999 to early 2001) to develop a draft document articulating a common vision and proposed elements of a collaborative effort. It was titled “A Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound.” This effort was primarily staffed by Jim Kramer, who later became the executive director of the Shared Strategy. The draft document outlined the goals and objectives of the regional coordination process, affirmed the ability of local communities to develop plans according to their needs and local context, and described the major steps in the process toward a full recovery plan.

The working group explored ways to facilitate and support efforts at both the watershed and regional levels, and it proposed that a nonprofit organization would be the most effective and acceptable coordinating structure to bring together the diverse interests involved in salmon recovery planning. It would provide leadership from outside of government to help circumvent the historic lack of trust among local, state, federal, and tribal governments. The nonprofit would use the existing infrastructure in terms of laws and agency procedures so as to not create an entirely new process.

In a key provision, the document stated that no entity would be required to give up any of its existing management or regulatory rights and responsibilities in order to participate in the Shared Strategy. It also committed to a collaborative process whereby all levels of government shared similar responsibility and authority for developing a recovery plan. These features were included to address some of the larger concerns discussed at the first Port Ludlow meeting—namely, fear of centralized control of the recovery planning process and loss of local input or existing rights or authority. The more collaborative process was intended to bring all entities together to cooperate on a plan and lend their authority and commitment.

The draft plan was revised based on comments from several hundred interested parties, in anticipation of the second meeting at Port Ludlow. The revised plan included incentives and disincentives for participation, defined work products at each step, clarified multiple tasks within certain steps, and identified a timeline for implementation.

Port Ludlow II Meeting

The Port Ludlow II meeting was held in January 2001 with mostly the same attendees as the first meeting. The major outcomes were general agreement on the draft for the Shared Strategy process and commitment to moving forward with a number of critical next steps, such as formally establishing a nonprofit organization to coordinate regional action. Governor Locke, Billy Frank, Jr., and Donna Darm pledged various forms of assistance and reaffirmed their commitment to participating in a collaborative regional process.

Shared Strategy Organization and Timeline

The Shared Strategy proposal presented a regional salmon recovery planning process that would engage locals on the watershed level and seek individual watershed plans that, in aggregate, would serve as the regional salmon recovery plan.

The Shared Strategy process took advantage of existing infrastructure for a watershed-based, bottom-up approach through the ESHB 2496 and ESHB 2514 state legislation described earlier. The Shared Strategy organized its efforts primarily through the watershed planning groups with lead entity mechanisms formed under ESHB 2496 and gave them responsibility for creating individual watershed plans. This approach tied the Shared Strategy structure directly to the SRF Board funding mechanism and created a strong incentive for groups to participate in order to increase their chances of securing funding for restoration projects and other purposes under the Act.

The Shared Strategy proposal delineated major steps and milestones that would culminate in the submission of the regional plan to NOAA in June 2005.

Components of the Shared Strategy

Because there was no existing infrastructure for joint planning among the many jurisdictions and organizations involved in the Shared Strategy, its coordinating structure would have to rely on existing entities for most of the actual planning work. The challenge would be to motivate coordinated activity on a scale and of a type that hadn't been seen, certainly in this region.

The challenges included relying on individual watersheds, not all of which had a history of local interests working together, to develop local plans that were scientifically credible, would gain local commitment for later implementation, and were sufficiently consistent across watersheds. This need for balance between local autonomy and having an overall plan that could have regional impact led to a combination of so-called “top-down, bottom-up” structures and mechanisms. The bottom-up dimension was characterized by having local watershed groups be responsible for developing local plans. The top-down dimension included having a NOAA-appointed Technical Recovery Team (TRT) provide initial scientific input to set recovery ranges for Chinook in the Puget Sound's 14 watersheds.¹³ The TRT also reviewed and provided nonbinding input on the draft plans of each watershed. The insistence on standards, schedules, and certain processes—and some centralization of activities and leadership—was also part of

¹³ TRTs also worked throughout Washington on setting recovery ranges for Chinook and other listed endangered species.

the top-down aspect. From the bottom to the top, leadership was sought and developed to ensure effective plan development and later implementation.

The Shared Strategy included five major entities that contributed to establishing the planning structure and developing the regional plan. The first entity was the nonprofit corporation, the **Puget Sound Salmon Forum** (although this was the legal corporate name, the overall effort, including this board became widely known, and is referred to in this report, as “the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound” or simply “the Shared Strategy”), which could receive and expend funds, hire staff, and serve as the legal focal point. It was not involved in directing or deciding policy. The small Shared Strategy staff (4 to 7 FTEs at varying times) reported formally through the executive director, Jim Kramer, to the board. This corporation’s sole mission was to ensure that salmon recovery planning proceeded in accordance with the Port Ludlow agreements. Dan Evans was the first president of the board; he later became a general member and Ralph Munro, a former Washington secretary of state, took over as president. The other board members during the lifetime of the Shared Strategy included Billy Frank, Jr., Colin Moseley (Simpson Investment), Marie Mentor (Laird Norton Trust Company and Pacific Rivers Council), and Lorraine Loomis (fisheries manager, Swinomish Tribe).

Second, an informal consultative group called the **Policy Work Group** began meeting early in the process, in the fall of 1999. Its members were mostly senior staff for the principals at their respective local, state, federal, and tribal agencies, who were among those on the Development Committee/Recovery Council (described below). They kept their superiors informed about the Shared Strategy policy-setting process, helped the Shared Strategy staff develop and examine policy options, and later reviewed the draft watershed plans as the policy counterpart to the TRT (also described below). The Policy Work Group had no formal decision-making role, but because of the potential influence and available expertise at these major entities, the group was valuable and influential in the policy development process. Importantly, this group contained representation from all of the major regulatory entities affecting salmon recovery. It did not have policy authority, but served as an advisory group and sounding board, bringing in existing knowledge, history, and access to expertise from their respective organizations. The group members also took new ideas and information about local capacity and efforts back to their respective agencies. This two-way communication and integration of missions had beneficial effects on what otherwise could have been two camps: one preserving old ways and assumptions, and another ignoring the knowledge and authority already in existence.

Third, the **Development Committee**, later known as the **Recovery Council** (after the plans were completed), was established as the primary policy-making body. All major regional policy decisions flowed through this group, which operated by consensus. Chaired by Ruckelshaus, the committee included prominent individuals representing most of the major constituencies, including environmental leaders, business leaders, county council members and executives,

mayors, state and federal agency department heads, and tribal government leaders. In the early period of the Shared Strategy, much of the trust placed in the process rested on the credibility of Ruckelshaus and the other committee members. The committee changed its name to the Recovery Council in January 2006 after the acceptance of the regional plan by NOAA, which signified the end of the planning phase and a shift to developing a long-term funding strategy. At this point, reflecting on the importance of watersheds in the upcoming implementation phase, the number of watershed representatives on the committee increased from two to 14, with each watershed in the Puget Sound salmon recovery area having a seat at the table.

Fourth, and at the heart of the effort, were the 14 **watershed planning groups**, where local recovery plans were developed.¹⁴ Members were locally appointed, and all groups existed and functioned prior to the establishment of Shared Strategy. Most of the watershed planning groups worked under the process established by the Salmon Recovery Planning Act (ESHB 2496), which authorized “lead entities”—local administrative bodies designated by a joint agreement between a county, its largest city, and the nearest tribe—to coordinate local projects and distribute funding. The lead entity could be a county, city, conservation district, special district, tribal government, or other entity. A few watershed groups produced plans by watershed groups organized under the earlier Watershed Planning Act (ESHB 2514) process. The interactions between the groups and the processes were complicated and changed over time. Many of the groups had substantially the same people in prior efforts and the Shared Strategy; in other cases each of the groups contributed to the final plan. In all cases, the local groups were led by a locally prominent chairperson and included representatives from a cross-section of local interests, including tribal government, county government, agriculture, environmental groups, property owners, developers, and the sport fishing community. These groups were staffed and their efforts were coordinated by a senior staff person, usually from the lead entity. The leaders of the 14 watershed planning groups were formally brought into a working group called the **Watershed Implementation Leads Group** in late 2004 or early 2005.

The fifth and final entity was the **Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team**, which was established (along with other geographically-based TRTs in Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and California) by NOAA in 2000 to set biological delisting criteria for ESA-listed salmon species (measurable criteria for determining at what point a species can be considered no longer “threatened”). TRTs are generally composed of six to 11 respected scientists from both within and outside of

¹⁴ The 14 watersheds in the Puget Sound were: East Kitsap (Water Resource Inventory Area 15), Elwha/Dungeness (WRIA 18), Green/Duwamish (WRIA 9), Hood Canal (WRIA 16), Whidbey and Camano Islands–Island County (WRIA 6, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish (WRIA 8); Nisqually (WRIA 11), Nooksack (WRIA 1), Puyallup/White and Clover/Chambers (WRIA 10 and 12), San Juan Islands (WRIA 2), Skagit (WRIA 3/4), Snohomish (WRIA 7), South Sound (WRIA 13 and 14), and Stillaguamish (WRIA 5).

federal agencies, with varied expertise in salmon biology, population dynamics, conservation biology, ecology, and other disciplines. The Puget Sound TRT (hereafter referred to as “the TRT”) came to play a central role in the Shared Strategy, breaking the typical mold of science teams simply having a separate standard setting and review function. While the TRT had no policy-making role, it became a highly integrated partner, particularly in certain watersheds with limited technical resources, and has been widely recognized for its contribution to the quality and value of the watershed plans. It played an active role in assisting watersheds, and later in reviewing and suggesting revisions in watershed plans. The TRT’s work suggests ways of creating useful interactions with policy makers and scientists without confusing their roles, and providing greater input to the scientists, protecting the independence of their judgments and input.

Shared Strategy Staff

A major function of the small Shared Strategy staff was to provide assistance and support to watersheds. The two watershed liaisons on the staff provided guidance and oversight to the 14 watersheds as they developed their local recovery plans. Through most of the planning period, these liaisons were the primary mechanism for sharing regional policy and science guidance with the watersheds and reporting back to Shared Strategy governance groups on the watersheds’ progress and issues. They were crucial to the work of the system, and had constant informal interaction in support of the watersheds’ organization and planning work.

The importance of this feedback loop was evident when the first round of technical guidance was released by the TRT and, for the most part, the watershed groups found it to be inaccessible to non-scientists and not in tune with the political realities of local planning processes. Many watersheds communicated their concerns to the watershed liaisons, leading to feedback to the TRT that resulted in revised guidance. This was a delicate moment and miscommunication was a real danger, but the staff working with TRT and the watershed groups assisted the TRT and its leader, Mary Ruckelshaus, in revising the guidance so that scientific input could more easily be used in developing the plans.

The Shared Strategy staff also worked actively to broaden federal, state, and local support for salmon recovery among elected officials and the public. Its association with respected regional leaders such as William D. Ruckelshaus and easy access to local leadership, including tribal leaders, helped build support for the salmon recovery process.

The Shared Strategy staff, led by Jim Kramer, also set regional goals and timelines for completion of draft and final plans. It did not have formal authority to enforce these deadlines, but it was successful in using informal mechanisms, including assistance and incentives to ensure that all 14 watersheds completed their plans by June 2005.

Another key element of the Shared Strategy was the development of a strategic communications plan, which included a monthly online newsletter, rewards and recognition for progress and interim successes, press outreach, and two Salmon Summits, in 2003 and in 2005, which each attracted hundreds of people and served to strengthen the Shared Strategy community, facilitate information sharing, show the breadth of involvement and commitment, recognize accomplishments and demonstrate support from high-profile officials such as Senator Patty Murray, Representative Norm Dicks, Billy Frank, Jr., and Governor Christine Gregoire.

Jim Kramer, the executive director of the Shared Strategy, was an experienced local government leader who had managed a large agency in King County and subsequently spent over a year learning about issues related to farming, fish, and watershed planning in the Puget Sound area in anticipation of the ESA listing. He worked on staffing the Port Ludlow meetings, initially in an unpaid capacity. The knowledge and relationships he developed in this early period proved important to his understanding of how existing salmon recovery institutions and forces were constructed and how they interacted (or didn't).

Kramer's role as executive director was to turn the Port Ludlow agreements into a working system of grassroots governance and policy making that could produce an integrated and worthwhile salmon recovery plan that had wide regional support and would be supported by NOAA. Drawing on his own and Ruckelshaus' experience, and in consultation with the Shared Strategy board, Development Committee/Recovery Council, Policy Work Group, and others, Kramer assembled the strategies, systems, and staff that would drive the organization toward plan completion. While a few participants complained that Kramer came across as heavy handed, especially early in the process, most participants in the process ultimately praised his leadership and skillful management and the value of his driving the process to a conclusion.

Shared Strategy Financing

The Shared Strategy planning process was financed through a variety of private and public sources. It is difficult to trace specific funding because it came from so many sources and flowed directly to participating entities, rather than through the Shared Strategy organization. Other than a modest budget for the small central staff and related coordination and strategic planning for the overall process, much of the funding was directly attributable to the efforts and focus of Ruckelshaus, Kramer, Lohn, and others, as well as to the increased commitment of the state, counties, and tribes, including redirection of some existing resources. The breadth of the coalition represented by the Development Committee/Recovery Council and the visibility and credibility of the board created a favorable climate for increasingly large funding requests to federal and state sources. After the plan was completed and approved, and the implementation effort rolled over into the broader Puget Sound Partnership, significant federal and state funding commitments were made. Perhaps the most relevant observation about funding and resources is to note how much more focused and coordinated the use of funding became.

On the federal level, the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF), which was established by Congress in 2000 in response to the ESA listing, brought a significant amount of funding to Puget Sound salmon recovery—more than \$572 million from 2000 to 2007, 32% of which was appropriated to Washington State (and distributed through the SRF Board process).

About \$5 million to \$10 million in funding came to the Shared Strategy through Interior Washington salmon grants, mostly provided to watersheds. The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office provided about \$1.5 million through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).

The Washington State Department of Ecology received money primarily for water issues through the Watershed Planning Act (ESHB 2514), but in some instances salmon recovery work benefited financially from this legislation. Although it is difficult to determine the exact amount allocated toward salmon recovery from these sources, it is estimated to be about \$200,000 annually.

WDFW contributed about \$800,000 annually in staff and funding to the Puget Sound salmon recovery effort and also provided part-time liaisons in each watershed (equivalent to 6 to 8 FTEs annually), a portion of whose work was devoted to the Shared Strategy.¹⁵

The GSRO contributed about \$200,000 annually to Puget Sound-specific salmon recovery work.

The tribes dedicated staff time to salmon recovery policy and science, with some tribes devoting 3 FTEs (about \$300,000 annually) to work related to the Shared Strategy. The NWIFC also had 1.5 FTEs directly working on the project each year (about \$150,000 annually). Additional funding was obtained by tribal leaders from PCSRF and individual tribes, but the amounts are not easy to separate and identify.

A significant amount of direct and in-kind resources came from city and county governments—estimated at about \$18 million to \$20 million per year. Money for local action was typically generated through current expenses, storm water utilities, and/or wastewater utilities. Generally, local funds supported local restoration projects and staff time. The Tri-County partners (Snohomish, King, and Pierce Counties) accounted for 80% to 90% of the total local spending on salmon recovery.

Several private Washington-based businesses, nonprofits, and foundations contributed to the Shared Strategy. Private funding was critical to getting the project off the ground. Before the

¹⁵ Not all of these funds emerged from the Shared Strategy effort or were coordinated with it. Fully separating the motivation and use of such funds is not possible. It is fair to say that, although some of this would have been appropriated and spent in the absence of the Shared Strategy, the magnitude, continuation, prioritization, and coordination would otherwise have been less.

formal organization of the nonprofit entity and the Port Ludlow II meeting, funding for the Shared Strategy was provided solely by Washington-based businesses and environmental foundations. Throughout the Shared Strategy effort, environmental foundations (such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) provided funding for events, the nonprofit's operating budget, and local salmon recovery efforts. The coordinating activities overseen by Kramer ranged from \$400,000 to \$700,000 annually.

Assessing the Shared Strategy

The capacity of the Puget Sound region to work toward salmon recovery is certainly greater as a result of the Shared Strategy process. We'll examine the structures and mechanisms that have contributed to this increased capacity.

Watershed Planning and Leads Implementation Groups

All watersheds had substantial salmon habitat restoration efforts going prior to the advent of the Shared Strategy. A few of the groups were working to develop a plan to recover the populations, which by necessity included harvest, hatchery, and protection actions. As a result of the Shared Strategy, each of the 14 watersheds has an approved salmon recovery plan in place that takes the next step in developing a comprehensive approach to recovery, and (for the most part) all of the groups are strengthened in representation, access to technical assistance, and funding. Despite some valid criticisms, most, if not all, of the plans are regarded as far better and the planning groups stronger than they would have been otherwise. All 14 plans include science-based goals and went through both a science review and a policy review that either approved or resulted in revisions. Most local planning groups have far stronger working relationships with state and local agencies and programs than before, and the potential for targeted and coordinated local projects, as well as more funding and policy attention, is far greater.

The Watershed Leads Implementation Group, with representation from all 14 watershed planning groups, has become a valuable forum for information sharing, policy discussions, policy testing, and collaboration as the effort moves into the implementation phase. The group has adopted and recommended an accountability system to evaluate how each watershed is doing and how well the system is supporting and executing the recovery plans.

In almost every jurisdiction, local political leaders, tribal leaders, landowners, real estate interests, leaders of community groups, advocacy groups, and local offices of state and federal agencies are involved in salmon recovery, working together in regular meetings in the local watershed councils. Local elected officials are far more aware of and connected to salmon recovery and related issues than before because many of them or their staff are directly involved, and they have had these issues brought directly before them by those who are involved.

Remaining challenges include the fact that not everyone in the community who can affect salmon is devoted to salmon recovery despite what is arguably far greater community support than is typical for most state or regional policy efforts.

Development Committee/Recovery Council

While a high-level, representative committee, with broad representation of the constituencies, as was the Development Committee/Recovery Council, is not uncommon when trying to address a complex natural resource or other community issue, no such council was in place related to salmon recovery or any similar issue before the ESA listing. Because of the careful work in forming and working with this group by leaders like Ruckelshaus, Kramer, Frank, and by the Shared Strategy staff, the group was able to deal with highly sophisticated and complex issues of policy, politics, representation, and funding. Now that the watersheds are more fully represented on the Recovery Council, an even more complete discussion of issues can take place with a highly representative group that represents all levels of the issue.

Challenges include the fact that under the new Puget Sound Partnership, the Recovery Council will have one more layer to go through to affect state or federal policy or funding. In addition, the implementation phase may entail greater political risks for the Recovery Council as its members press local jurisdictions and others at the local level to take the actions needed to further protect water quality and habitat—including the possibility of more restricted and coordinated land use.

TRT and Policy Work Group

Although no longer in place in their initial forms, these groups affiliated with the Shared Strategy at the regional level created important capacity.

The Technical Recovery Team's (TRT) application of science to the recovery planning effort was crucial to raising the quality and consistency of the plans and gaining credibility in many quarters. The TRT's direct technical assistance contributed to a regional scientific perspective and a set of well-qualified scientists to the planning effort. The acceptance and active engagement of a centralized science function for goal setting, assessment, and advising was a breakthrough.

New arrangements for gaining scientific input under the PSP were not fully established as this paper was completed, but was underway. However, scientific input will be important to making plan adjustments and assessing implementation actions. The lack of a specific resource that can have a similar, if not expanded, level of impact would be a concern to be addressed.

The Policy Work Group brought the state, federal, tribal, and local regulators into regular contact and created a way for them to carry out their mission without behaving in typical regulatory ways and helped achieve coordination among them. It provided a key linkage between on the ground efforts and high-level policy staff at the agencies and tribal

governments. It was also a key link between existing authorities and the emerging coordinating and policy development influence of the Shared Strategy. This group was created by Kramer and Ruckelshaus following the Port Ludlow meetings to give the sponsoring organizations a way to play a meaningful role without giving them veto power. These groups had not previously worked together on a regular basis nor in this manner, so the precedent established for this type of coordinating and linking body will be useful for the future implementation of and review efforts around natural resource management.

Coordination of policy among the state, federal, tribal, and local government entities will still be necessary, so a way to gain consultation of the sort gained through the Policy Work Group is likely to remain a necessity.

Overall Impact

The capacity to recover salmon and address related issues is, in most watersheds, significantly enhanced and advanced over the fractious system that previously existed. There is now a mechanism for each watershed to pursue reasonably coordinated recovery goals through an approved plan that involved in its development a large segment of the interested local community, related state and federal agencies, and tribes. The Recovery Council is in place to provide coordination, problem solving, and persuasion as implementation challenges are faced. By all accounts, it is nearly impossible to imagine that a \$40 million per year budget for Puget Sound Recovery would be forthcoming in the absence of this planning and infrastructure and the resultant perception by federal and state authorities of the relevance of the plans, and local and state commitment to them. Despite remaining issues in some watersheds and gaps in the overall plan, useful mechanisms are in place to pursue recovery and work through the remaining challenges. Among the remaining challenges will be to integrate harvest and hatchery considerations more fully with the plans that were developed out of the Shared Strategy process.

The accomplishments and mechanisms developed and implanted for implementation seem well suited to salmon recovery in a way that the previous system, which depended upon traditional means of organizing agency and jurisdictional work, clearly did not. Early in the planning process, there was far more dependence upon NOAA, the regulatory agencies, and Shared Strategy staff. Now, if funding holds up, the local watershed groups and the Recovery Council have full energy and momentum to do the work largely on their own, as it was intended. It is not perfect and the results are not assured, but it has the ability to improve itself, and represents a thoughtful and highly effective response to the challenge of salmon recovery and the difficult political and institutional setting and history in which such work would have to take place.

Transition from the Shared Strategy to the Puget Sound Partnership

Even though the prospect of a Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) or some other larger umbrella for implementation had been considered since late 2005, as the planning stage neared its end,

there was talk of keeping the Shared Strategy organization itself in place because it was largely trusted and effective. But it was subsequently determined that the agency should keep its word and be dissolved, but leave in place, of course, the system of watershed planning groups connected to the regional policy making a coordinating work of the Recovery Council and watershed leads group.

Kramer, working with Ruckelshaus, the Recovery Council, the Shared Strategy board, and the Policy Work Group, initiated discussions about the follow-on effort and expanding it to focus on overall Puget Sound restoration. The implementation of the regional salmon recovery plans falls under the broader mandate of the PSP and its funding mechanism.¹⁶

The transition to the PSP, including the departure of the Shared Strategy board and staff, left a void in terms of a trusted and knowledgeable team known to all of the players. The PSP, a state agency, will take over much of the outreach to state and federal officials and funding sources, as well as to some of the science resources. This could strengthen the effort, but there is some fear that it may also create an extra layer of bureaucracy. The fact that a number of key leaders carried over to the PSP is a reason for optimism regarding some of these concerns. The majority of the individuals from the watersheds or the Recovery Council recognize that a new leadership group and agency will need some time to put its plans in place and pick up where things left off. Ensuring the needed scientific input, coordinating regulatory agencies, and maintaining the careful balance of local autonomy with meeting regional goals will all require important attention from the PSP.¹⁷

The PSP has new authority and structural elements that could allow or lead it to be more directive. This potentially threatens, at least to some degree, the voluntary nature of the effort, which is widely credited with attracting and retaining the needed local and regional players. The PSP is so far acting in ways that emphasize voluntary involvement and action, but until the more directive powers are used, or their presence can be assessed, the impact remains to be seen.

¹⁶ In 2005 Governor Gregoire pledged to restore Puget Sound to a clean and healthy condition by 2020. In April 2006 the legislature approved funding (\$20 million) to start this initiative. On May 7, 2007 Governor Gregoire signed SB 5372, an act creating the Puget Sound Partnership. The Puget Sound Partnership is a state agency responsible for developing an “Action Agenda” by December 1, 2008 that will put the Puget Sound on the path to health by 2020. The Shared Strategy organization officially disbanded by the end of 2007. Budget shortfalls due to recessionary conditions that began to emerge in late 2008 threatened the continuation of funding at these levels.

¹⁷ The items in this report that refer to the Puget Sound Partnership and possible challenges facing it, or concerns or hopes expressed, all predate the emergence of the agency and its plans. Its Action Agenda was released in late 2008, after most of the research and interviews were completed for this report.

The PSP, while losing some important elements of continuity, has potentially useful new features, including a broader mandate for Puget Sound clean-up and the interest and visibility that brings. Also, a number of the people currently in PSP leadership positions were heavily involved at senior levels in the Shared Strategy effort.

Criticism of the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound

The study team sought the views of organizations and knowledgeable individuals who had been critical of the Shared Strategy. Frequent criticisms included: Insufficient consideration of climate change impacts, insufficient or variable quality of some of the plans relative to recovery goals, insufficient consideration of harvest impacts and H-integration, insufficient accountability for plan results, and inadequate commitments and control over land use and other local policies that would determine plan implementation. Many of these issues were explicitly included in the post-plan work agendas and moved into the PSP agenda by Shared Strategy leadership and staff, and NOAA explicitly recognized many of these in its Supplement that accompanied acceptance of the plan.

The major difference between the external critics and the Shared Strategy leadership and participants' recognition of these criticisms is the following: Those on the inside saw the creation of a problem solving infrastructure for further progress, armed with the NOAA Supplement and the PSP, as a major achievement and a basis for resolving the yet to be addressed issues. Critics were less sympathetic with the Shared Strategy's challenges in getting to this point and believed that more should have been done before gaining NOAA approval or further funding. In some instances the critics were not hopeful about the PSP process, although many of them were.

In our interviews, Shared Strategy leadership made among the most detailed and comprehensive presentation of the risks, critical path variables, holes, and problems in the plan and its implementation. Many issues, such as those related to land use policies, which are largely determined at the county level, were viewed by the Shared Strategy leadership and staff as longer-term issues that would have to be worked on following the initial agreements on plan and implementation structure. The critics on these issues that are also supporters expressed the hope that further progress would occur; those that were more broadly critical were normally less optimistic and were further chagrined that Ruckelshaus, Kramer, NOAA Fisheries, or others with influence didn't force issues harder during the planning process.

Essentially, the main disagreements are over whether or not more could have been required or accomplished in the time available for the planning. Some of the disagreement centers on whether or not Ruckelshaus or Kramer, for example, could have forced more movement on the part of local governments, or Kramer and the staff, or the Development Committee, could have forced certain of the plans to have been more fully developed by withholding approval or otherwise refusing to accept them.

All but a few of the critics noted that the infrastructure and funding now operating around salmon recovery provided a significant opportunity and hoped serious progress could be made. Certainly some things, in hindsight, could have been done better or sooner. Nonetheless, the Shared Strategy leadership acknowledged the criticisms and accepted that the careful effort in structuring the ongoing implementation work and providing approval, encouragement, and resources would be the means by which the remaining issues could best be addressed.

Acceptance of all the local plans, and the resultant regional plan, likely represented a judgment by the Development Committee and subsequently NOAA that this was such a large step forward and the resultant infrastructure for ongoing progress so significant that it warranted acceptance on the merits of the progress shown and the prospects for results.

In summary form, the criticism can be evaluated as follows:

- These criticisms raise valid issues that would affect the quality of the outcome. An inadequate plan that does not sufficiently provide or protect habitat, for example, threatens the intended outcome.
- Many of these criticisms have been raised without reference to or appreciation for the barriers and challenges involved in addressing them in the Shared Strategy period and to the possibility of managing through many of them in the next phase.
- The shortcomings raised in the primary criticisms were also recognized by Shared Strategy leadership and are significantly incorporated into the work plans they developed, and reflected substantially in the PSP plans.
- To the extent that the substantive concerns are not in the NOAA Supplement and/or in the ongoing plans, they would merit greater attention. Criticisms about whether or not Ruckelshaus or others could have forced certain additional actions do not seem well founded when one examines what was achieved against the back drop of limited resources and time, and no formal authority.
- Other than a very few critics, even the harshest critics acknowledged the potential for the ongoing activities of the PSP, which include the Shared Strategy results and infrastructure for implementation and policy problem solving, as an important achievement.

Summary of Lessons Learned

The Shared Strategy spawned an institutionalized means of carrying out salmon recovery through a voluntary process and structure that surpassed anything that had existed before the Port Ludlow discussions. It did so with no formal authority, starting with no infrastructure, minimal funding, and only a small staff. It succeeded by judiciously “borrowing” the authority of the participating entities that came from the Port Ludlow agreements and the collective authority of the initial Development Committee and nonprofit board, as well as the reputation

of William Ruckelshaus and the credibility of recognized regional leaders like Billy Frank and Ron Sims.

It went from concentrating coordination and leadership in the Development Committee/Recovery Council to a stage where the watersheds individually and collectively (through the Watershed leads group) became the drivers of the implementation phase, with continued policy coordination, accountability, and oversight at the regional level. This may represent a new paradigm of balancing regulatory authority and standards with voluntary compliance and local problem solving, even as the model presents challenges to implementation.

The Shared Strategy approach will certainly continue to be evaluated as the results of the salmon recovery efforts become more apparent, but the initial lessons learned are already worth examining for their applicability to other environmental and related economic development issues that cross traditional lines of authority, funding, and relationships. In this case, the effort spanned county, city, state, tribal, federal, and special district jurisdictions, as well as a variety of regulatory programs and private interests. No existing entity was in an obvious position to oversee the effort. Despite numerous localized efforts in the Puget Sound region and elsewhere that have taken a multi-jurisdictional approach to public policy issues, the Shared Strategy was largely unprecedented for its scale, the complexity and variety of the setting, and for the scope of the needed coalition. It required building a new kind of organization and a new approach to planning, oversight, and implementation.

As with any effort undertaken under challenging circumstances, some omissions or failures can be identified. However, based on its goals and the challenges it faced, the Shared Strategy represents a superior effort at using a collaborative process to address complex and polarizing issues.

The following principles and concepts that contributed significantly to the Shared Strategy could usefully be kept in mind when addressing large-scale, complex policy issues that affect many constituencies. These descriptions attempt, where possible, to illuminate the more general principle and show how it applied to the Shared Strategy. It is important to note that these principles in aggregate were what led to the success of the Shared Strategy; no one principle would have been sufficient in isolation. It is in combination that they have contributed to real progress.

1. Understand the relevant history and institutions

Examining the history and the institutions involved in an issue is crucial to understanding what the old arguments have been, what solutions have been attempted or considered, and what smaller-scale successes can be built on. This helps to identify the institutions and resources at the local, state, and regional levels that can or should play a role. In addition, those who have been involved in the past can be valuable sources of data and other information.

The Shared Strategy benefited greatly from understanding and respecting the institutional relationships and past players, some of whom were concerned that earlier or ongoing efforts would be overshadowed by the Shared Strategy. The involvement of these players was crucial to the degree of cooperation achieved. Kramer's efforts before Port Ludlow and during the early stages of the Shared Strategy to learn about the institutions and personalities that had been involved in salmon recovery were crucial. The Policy Work Group and the inclusive Development Committee also provided ongoing perspective on the history and past players.

A common temptation when trying to solve a difficult issue is to invent a new method or infrastructure. Not only can this approach be prohibitively expensive, but it can alienate past players and cut off access to existing expertise. The Shared Strategy made a concerted effort to draw on the strengths of existing institutions and people with expertise—even those who had been part of earlier conflicts. For example, although the regulatory agencies were seen by some parties as the enemy, or as insufficiently active, these agencies became members of the Policy Work Group and the Recovery Council, and by working with this system they became (and were perceived to be) helpful and contributory. Tribal science staffs, many of which were strong by the late 1990s but were still unknown or mistrusted by some farm and governmental groups, were also invited to be central players. The NOAA-appointed Puget Sound TRT was also actively engaged by Shared Strategy, and by a number of the watersheds. The existing watershed planning infrastructure was largely adopted, and active watershed groups already in existence were substantially embraced (although some difficulties and conflicts ensued, and some remained).

2. Adopt an inclusive approach

Efforts to bring together polarized parties seem to be more successful if no party is asked to give up its legally granted rights or authority. Later, agreements are likely to emerge that prompt leaders to modify or suspend the application of certain rights or to pool their rights, powers, or even resources. But a voluntary, non-coercive, collaborative process helps create a safer beginning, making it more likely that the disparate parties will choose to participate and suspend non-constructive exercise of their rights.

The early agreement, as part of the formation of the Shared Strategy effort, that no state, federal, or tribal entity would be asked to give up statutory or treaty-granted powers was crucial to gaining participation of these entities.

Hence, the Shared Strategy did not attempt to strip counties, cities, tribes, or others of authority; rather, it found ways to encourage them to “lend”—selectively and by agreement—their authority to the Shared Strategy or to pool their efforts and resources. One example was the use of funding and staff from county, state, tribal, federal, and other entities. Another example was a voluntary willingness a few years into the process to take an approach that leaned much more towards recognizing regional, rather than only local, priorities. Worth noting, however, is the fact that all parties sought to avoid federal imposition of a centrally

prepared plan—a concern that might have substantially increased their flexibility and willingness to participate. Flexibility seems to increase with trust in the process and the other parties, and also with incentives and confidence in one’s goals being at least reasonably met in the outcome.

The breadth of membership and visibility of the Port Ludlow signatories and of the Development Committee, as well as the Port Ludlow agreements themselves, also signaled a commitment to inclusion. The support and cooperation of the attorney general and governor were also valuable, particularly for gaining the trust of state agencies.

Shared Strategy events and recognition of contributions, progress, and achievements also contributed to a sense of being included and recognized, and showed the breadth of inclusion of one’s own peers and those of other communities of interest.

The inclusive approach also allowed the Shared Strategy to tap into the considerable amount of existing scientific, technical, and policy expertise that could aid in salmon recovery planning. This expertise resided in a number of state agencies, counties, and tribes. Harnessing these resources created significant capacity and induced federal, tribal, state, and local institutions to participate and ultimately become part of the implementation process. Building this expertise from scratch would have been nearly impossible.

3. There must be a reason for people to work together: Non-traditional agency posture regarding regulatory action and incentives

In this instance, NOAA worked to find a balance that conveyed a regulatory threat and also demonstrated its willingness to be part of and cooperative with a locally developed solution. Initial fears of an imposed solution that would not sufficiently recognized local conditions seemed to be a powerful reason for those who had been in conflict among themselves locally to try and find a way to work together. NOAA’s actions under Stelle as regional director helped to create the idea that NOAA would strictly enforce ESA requirements if voluntary compliance was not forthcoming. History of ESA plans imposed in other parts of the country also created concern, perhaps contributing even more than the recent enforcement actions in the Northwest.

NOAA also made clear, through the Port Ludlow meetings and at other times, its willingness to support a locally driven collaborative effort. A combination of its senior staff and other involvement by Darm, Lohn, Elizabeth Babcock and others, and financial support provided a balanced set of signals.

Subsequently, the role of a regulatory agency in a process like the Shared Strategy also requires a balance that is not typical to traditional regulatory postures. It must participate as an equal at the table, and not in its regulatory role, but must also be in the position to ensure that initial parameters of the process can support the needed regulatory standards, then play a participatory and supportive role, without trying to dictate the outcome. Rather, the agency will

have dictated the standard, but not the means to reach it, leaving the latter to the parties. This departs from traditional regulatory tools and behaviors: The tools were developed to fit the challenge, rather than relying on one traditional set of tools.

There must also be a reason for people to come together, usually a combination of fears and incentives, and the responsible agency usually holds important keys to both. Later, other reasons, such as interim successes and common purpose become stronger, but the initial posture of the agency and its ongoing behavior will strongly affect the outcome. Non-traditional processes will pose challenges and the behavior of, and tools used by, NOAA in this instance bear scrutiny for identification of useful tools. Providing a path that honors the efforts and goals of existing authorities and affected parties and helps them succeed in a manner that allows them to share in the accomplishment seems important, particularly when a sustained effort is necessary in order to make a difference.

4. Deploy trusted leaders as “conveners,” and work to evolve personal trust to build trust in the process and its institutions

People like Ruckelshaus, Frank, Munro, and Evans, most of whom were outside of state government and were respected for their intentions and integrity, helped gain the trust and involvement of the crucial tribal, local government, business, and agricultural constituencies while retaining the trust of state and federal officials. The reputations of these leaders—and the symbolism of their commitment—attracted other regional leaders and convinced local leaders that this effort was not business as usual. Sims is credited with first seeing the need for iconic leaders outside of local, state, and federal government to bring people together.

As the effort progressed, its momentum and credibility depended less on the reputations of the initial leaders and more on actual accomplishments, improved local relationships, and the commitment of the Shared Strategy staff, the Development Committee, and local watershed groups. The acceptance of the regional plan by NOAA and increased funding represented yet another stage, in which key entities and leaders were still important but personalities and symbolism were far less crucial.

In the final stage, as the Shared Strategy was discontinued and the PSP took over, the reliance on individual conveners was even further diminished; the credibility of the system and its accomplishments were the key to a successful transition.

5. Written Agreements to increase clarity and confidence

The initial agreement at Port Ludlow provided the blueprint for how the planning process would work, and captured a variety of commitments to participate, in what form, and how the process would be supported. While the agreement itself had value as a “constitution” for what was agreed to and minimizing potential confusion or later concerns that might arise, the importance of the problem solving that led up to it is critical to creating a clear, effective, and shared understanding of how the work would proceed. The Port Ludlow Agreement was the first

agreement, and was important simply as symbolizing to all parties that some important progress had occurred, as well as for defining for all what they had agreed to. This also provided a document that could be shown to the constituency members who had not participated at Port Ludlow to indicate what had been agreed to.

The Shared Strategy kept written records of meetings and decisions and a very substantial amount of this material was on the organization's website. The next comprehensive written agreements were centered on the plans. The watershed plans were, in essence, agreements by representatives on the watershed councils of what they and any institutions they represented at the table were committing to do. (This was true in almost all watersheds.) The regional Shared Strategy plan, encompassing the 14 watershed plans and related additional issues, represents the overall agreement of what they agreed collectively to do. Having these records of agreement are important future references for showing progress and compelling the earlier discussions and related agreements to a point of closure as the parties seek to express clearly what they have agreed to. Such clarification and memorialization avoids confusion later, and displays the agreements and related mutual commitments that have been made to sponsors and others.

6. Create broad-based awareness and support

Widespread awareness of the importance and impact of salmon recovery and of progress that was being made in planning and gathering resources, and in the early mitigation project work, helped to build momentum and belief that the large task could be accomplished. The awareness built outside of those directly involved—especially among public policy and business community leaders—not only created awareness of the effort and its breadth, but also helped mitigate opposition to the Shared Strategy and helped build political and financial support.

The business community played a number of important roles; a business community member sat on the Shared Strategy board of directors, and businesses helped fund events and activities, especially in the early planning phases before there was sufficient progress to garner public and foundation funds. Ruckelshaus, Evans, and Munro, among others, enjoyed good standing with the private sector and were able to help with connections to the business community. Overall, business involvement was not as robust at the regional or local levels as was anticipated, and it remains to be seen—as water and land use issues become more central to local salmon recovery decisions—whether this lesser involvement in the planning stages will affect the success of the implementation process. At least, the degree of business awareness and involvement served to reduce the possibility of later differences or concern with policy or resource decisions made from the Shared Strategy process, or related requests for state or federal funds.

The involvement of other interests, including environmental groups, tribes, the agricultural community, and local governments, appears to have been strengthened by outreach and publicity efforts. Much favorable publicity resulted from the Salmon Summits, awards and recognition, and newsletters, as well as the respectful attention these groups received from the

Shared Strategy staff and leadership. Some leaders reported that the significant outreach activity created an atmosphere and awareness that made it easier for them to explain and justify their involvement and commitments. Recognition and awards fell into this category as well.

The Shared Strategy staff also made significant efforts to persuade elected officials, agency leaders, tribal officials, environmental leaders, and their staff to attend the major events so they could see who else was involved, in addition to gaining substantive information about what was being attempted and discussed.

7. Consider choosing a non-authoritative entity to coordinate

Because of the history of the salmon recovery problem, and the related conflicts and concerns, an independent, non-authoritative coordinating entity was needed that would coordinate the efforts of existing entities and stakeholders. The establishment of the Shared Strategy organization (board and staff) provided a coordinating entity that was trusted (it reflected the Port Ludlow agreement) and was not feared. Under the circumstances, an entity with significant formal authority could not have brought a sufficient range of parties to the table. Yet, a coordinating entity was necessary in order to deal with the many challenging tasks that would have to be performed. Such central coordination was crucial, for example, for ensuring that science would play a significant role in setting goals and reviewing plans. Without the intense work done by Shared Strategy, the plans would not have had the same opportunity to incorporate the TRT's scientific input. The Shared Strategy developed the needed authority through its actions and membership on the key groups (Development Committee/Recovery Council, etc.), but it was the non-threatening, coordinating posture that provided much of the initial acceptance of the Shared Strategy as the coordinating entity. Because it was a creature of the full range of constituents, governed by the board on business, and by the highly representative Development Committee on policy, it had the needed credibility. Had it been more independent, it may not have been able to attract the initial membership and support that was so crucial to ultimately producing a plan.

This coordinating entity consisted of Kramer and the small Shared Strategy staff. Kramer exercised substantial strategic leadership at all stages, and the staff initiated or suggested and implemented strategic initiatives and provided support to the Development Committee/Recovery Council and the Watershed Leads group. The entity had only as much authority as it could earn or assert without alienating the Shared Strategy participants. To many, this appeared to be a weakness and a limitation. But in the end, it was crucial to helping resolve conflicts and decrease mistrust among the parties involved. Over time, the Shared Strategy staff, particularly Jim Kramer, developed considerable independent influence and impact because of the non-authoritative charter and the degree of relationship and trust building they had to engage in, and the necessarily consensus decision making style that was required.

Keeping the central staff small was symbolically and financially important. The Shared Strategy relied on the cooperation of existing entities for many functions, which had the benefit of redirecting their resources toward the goals of the planning effort. This also showed respect for the existing entities, as discussed earlier. More authority and resources might have made the staff's work easier, but at a much greater scale, it might also have prevented agreement at Port Ludlow and the critical mass of early support from key leaders. However, greater funding for technical assistance and other help for watersheds, applied at the right moment, might have given the Shared Strategy staff greater leverage with the watersheds by providing valuable assistance that could have eased the work and strengthened many of the plans. For other efforts of this type, we would recommend greater resources for the central staff to use for these purposes.

8. Gain consensus on the planning process

The Shared Strategy process and its governance structure were both products of agreement. It is common in mediation to recognize that collaborative solutions must be voluntary. The consent of all parties to the process gives the later outcome its legitimacy. The various stakeholders joined the Shared Strategy process because they agreed to the process, including a non-authoritative coordinating entity. Without such an agreed upon approach, any salmon recovery effort might have become a much easier target of criticism over the process or the outcome—particularly from lawmakers and others who might later be asked to fund implementation.

Many participants in the Shared Strategy noted the importance of the voluntary nature of the process and how it motivated their constituencies to stay involved. Some have worried that the new PSP, a state agency with some sanctions available, might be less successful. Others are less concerned because the PSP system is itself the product of agreement. One concern is that the PSP might resort to compulsory tools too quickly.

The support of legitimate sources of authority—such as NOAA, tribes, and major state agencies—is also crucial. Support from tribal governments and entities such as the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) were equally crucial because no major salmon policy could be implemented without their involvement. The state and federal governments would be asked to fund much of the plan activity, so their support for the process was also critical. Their participation as partners in the Port Ludlow process and agreement was essential to getting both a plan and later funding. Among other influences, environmental groups would have had standing to litigate in the absence of an agreeable plan.

Within this agreed upon framework (the Port Ludlow agreement and other agreements in the Development Committee) there was also a need for clear management of the process. Plan deadlines and other “requirements” were imposed and created a significant stir, given that this was a voluntary process. However, the agreement to participate in the overall process, the shared policy and governance on the larger parameters and questions, and the overall trust that

developed for Kramer and the staff, allowed these needed management rigidities to be effected.

9. Equalize resources

A major challenge was the differences in capacity among the watersheds. Some counties had large tax bases and others did not; other differences included the mix of urban and rural areas. Some watersheds were already involved in salmon recovery or related work, while others did not. Other disparities included the availability of data and sufficient technical staff, broadly representative planning committees, knowledge and experience in conflict resolution, leadership at the staff and community level, and experience in reaching into the community. In the end, this disparity in technical staff and related capacity for data collection and analysis and plan development may be one of the largest factors accounting for quality differences and at least a large proportion of conflict over plan adequacy.

The TRT helped level the playing field by providing science background, input, a planning template, and later assistance and review. The Shared Strategy watershed liaisons helped watersheds access information and funding. Providing expertise to equalize these disparities would be valuable in future efforts of a similar nature. In this case, however, certain barriers and sensitivities stood in the way of doing more, including, but not limited to time and resource constraints. Also, finding a way to distribute additional funds, other than through the SRF Board process, might have required some time. As mentioned earlier, the Shared Strategy staff and budget were kept deliberately small in light of sensitivities in some of the local areas and to keep resources focused on local planning and recovery efforts. Finding a way to ensure sufficient local resources, especially for technical work, in a way that supports the overall process would be valuable in future efforts.

10. Use science, metrics, and data

Often forgotten in discussions of collaborative problem solving is the importance of goals and measurements, which can help guard against two pitfalls: having goals become political in nature, and adopting a least-common-denominator approach to goal setting and agreement. The Shared Strategy's efforts in this area included setting deadlines for watershed plans and having the TRT guide development of target population ranges across all 14 watersheds.

The Shared Strategy also used performance metrics to track progress in returning fish populations and improvement in habitat and infrastructure. In the last 6 months of the Shared Strategy, the Watershed Leads group recommended a report card system to allow each watershed to grade its progress based on a variety of quantitative and qualitative measures. This illustrated the degree of progress regarding attention to accountability and a willingness to be accountable. While the report card system was not adopted prior to the transition to PSP, the PSP was able to move forward with a degree of measurement and accountability that would have been unimaginable at the beginning of the Shared Strategy effort.

The staff's work and discussions with the Development Committee/Recovery Council, and Watershed Leads group was constantly focused on trying to identify and measure results that met the goals. This is not an easy task, but it is important for focusing resources and for gaining agreement on useful activities. The capacity to agree upon and use metrics and data seems to have improved with time and the greater understanding of data and issues that evolved.

11. Integrate science

The use of science in the Shared Strategy process merits emulation. Science-based targets and using standardized, transparent methods provided an objective standard that was applied equitably and nonpolitically to all watersheds. This objective underpinning to the planning process went largely unchallenged by those participating, although there were, as noted, some—mostly external—criticisms regarding the sufficiency of the standards or rigor with which watersheds were held to the standards.

Interestingly, the science was provided by the TRT, which was appointed by NOAA, and NOAA was the entity that passed judgment on the plans. However, the TRT only set ranges for each watershed; the co-managers of the state fishery (the treaty tribes and WDFW) set the actual targets within those ranges. This approach provided some degree of local control and ownership of the targets, but also allowed NOAA as the regulator to appoint those who would set the target ranges by which the sufficiency of the plans would be judged. Even though NOAA policy staff did not influence the TRT targets, this appointment process gave legitimacy to the targets as part of the standard to which NOAA later held the plans. The independence of the TRT, in yet another way, lent legitimacy to the target setting. This is an interesting balance of influence over the use of science in policy making and related regulation and bears examination and emulation in appropriate settings.

The TRT's composition immediately lent it credibility. It was headed by a senior NOAA scientist, Dr. Mary Ruckelshaus, and included state agency and tribal scientists. This mix of scientific backgrounds resulted in a relatively broad-based group, many with significant experience in the field, some with knowledge of NOAA policy obligations, and others with expertise related to the Puget Sound its fisheries. The formation of the TRT coincided with the ESA listing and predated the establishment of the Shared Strategy; its charter was independent of NOAA policy making.

The TRT, through the efforts of Dr. Ruckelshaus and the Shared Strategy director and staff, developed a relationship with the Shared Strategy process and the watersheds that brought useful insights to policy makers and returned information of value to the science team. In addition to their independent work on the target populations, the TRT reviewed the watershed plan drafts in an advisory capacity, which resulted in changes, some of which were substantial. This task placed heavy demands on the TRT members and was still inadequate to make up for all the technical deficits at the local level, so in future efforts this role should be staffed more substantially.

The TRT was apparently also a major player in the development of the NOAA Supplement, which accompanied NOAA's acceptance of the plan and noted some of the plan's shortcomings. This demonstrated the TRT's ability to maintain objectivity and independence in weighing the adequacy of the plan. It appears that the knowledge that TRT members gained about local challenges helped them better understand the real nature of the barriers and deficiencies in the plans.

12. Maintain continuous communication among parties

Ongoing contact between the Shared Strategy and federal and state government agencies, tribal fisheries authorities, and the counties—through the Policy Work Group and Development Committee/Recovery Council as well as through informal discussions—provided a constant flow of information. This kept concerns and rumors in abeyance and made expertise, resources, historical knowledge, and institutional memories available where needed. This set of linkages, and the substantive understanding it produced, also set the stage for later acceptance of the plan by state and federal authorities.

A crucial linkage was to federal authorities—in particular, to NOAA through Darm, Lohn, and others, as well to members of the Congressional delegation of Murray, Dicks, and Rep. Jennifer Dunn—to give them a sense of the progress being made and what roles they might be asked to play, to gain information or resources through their efforts, and to allow them to ask questions in low-key settings. Similar value came from interaction with leaders of tribal fisheries interests and state officials. These federal interactions were typically carried out by Ruckelshaus and Kramer on behalf of the Shared Strategy, often with participation from Frank, Sims, and others.

Connections with tribes were maintained at a number of levels—most importantly at the watershed level, but also at the regional level. Had a significant portion of tribal interests—such as the NWIFC or individual tribes—been opposed to the Shared Strategy, government support might have been reduced or might never have been forthcoming—not to mention how difficult it would have been to produce and implement the plans. Where tribes and local entities worked together on the watershed recovery plans, the plans were typically more substantial (although the process was not always easy and did not result in agreement between tribes and other constituencies in all cases).

Ongoing communication with those at the grass roots level was also essential, as shown through the newsletter, the two summits, the Watershed Liaison group, and the work of the watershed coordinators, among other activities. The recognition awards were an example of reinforcing the message that recovery could happen, that things could be done better. These and other gestures, and specific articulations that this effort could succeed, were important additives and perhaps instrumental to evidence of the plans' success that began to show up after the first few years. Without real progress, these messages would not have ended up being useful, but without these conscious messages through outreach and interaction, the interested parties

would not have seen the progress and the possibilities that were being made, or known to look for them.

13. Distinguishing voluntary participation in a collaborative process from independent action and decisions

Because there was an agreement (Port Ludlow Agreement) to establish a collaborative planning process, everyone was there voluntarily. But, because of the pain and difficulty of getting to that agreement, there was an ethical understanding that interim dissatisfactions would not lead to parties ending their participation. While anyone could theoretically walk away, the ethical understanding, reinforced by the broad leadership presence, assured that the group had sufficient representation and forums through which to work through difficult issues rather than assuming that an impasse represented the end of discussions. The work by the staff and leadership to find solutions to emerging problems helped to make these forums—and related informal interactions—effective and trusted. In order for a solution to be found and a stable planning model in place, fostering an ethic like the following is important: Being present is voluntary, agreeing is voluntary, but there is an implicit, if not explicit, commitment to abide by the agreement on a regional recovery plan, if agreement is reached. So, it is worthwhile in working with parties in a particular context to note the nuances of what is meant by voluntary, and how those setting up and operating the process can work with the constraints and opportunities that this offers.

The specter of NOAA rejecting the effort and taking the matter out of local hands provided one of the few negative sanctions and surely contributed to willingness to stay at the table, particularly in the early portions of the Shared Strategy process. The constant availability of Kramer, staff, and Ruckelshaus, and the willingness of other leaders to invest time in problem solving—particularly the existence of increasingly functional mechanisms for raising and resolving issues—allowed voluntary participation to turn into results. The existence of funding, science assistance, and help with plans and local issues all created reasons for the parties to remain voluntarily engaged. Later, as noted, the results generated through projects and through advancing, and later accepted plans, created reasons to remain voluntarily engaged for reasons other than a regulatory threat.

When seeking to begin a voluntary process, it should be recognized that volunteering is long term and also requires a commitment to problem solving and to an agreed upon result, and that the process must have incentives, reasons, and mechanisms for reinforcing the value of the voluntary commitment and for solving later conflicts. In this instance, as in other highly polarized situation, voluntary participation is often the only way parties can become involved given internal politics and incentives and legitimate concerns about giving up rights and freedom of action. A well crafted mechanism, attuned to the circumstances and effectively carried out, can wring a substantial amount of collective action from voluntary participation and lead to a funded, sponsored, and collective agreement. Among the tools used by the Shared Strategy were emphasizing local projects to demonstrate what could be done by working together, and

celebrating the successes. However, it is almost certainly true that the most important initial glue was a combination of the threat of NOAA generating and enforcing its own plan and the presence and commitment of a sufficient range of respected leaders to work together to avoid the threat.

As confidence grows in the mechanisms, people will accept more direction and suggestions from leadership, recognizing that leadership has also learned a lot about the concerns of the parties. Viewed in this light, and with the fact that there is agreement on the plan in most quarters, it is possible that the more directive powers of the PSP may be accepted if appropriately applied in the context of respect for voluntary engagement. But in the early stages, following a long period of conflict and disagreement, a strictly voluntary alliance may be a crucial entry to problem solving possibilities.

In less complex circumstances, the efforts may be less involved, but the overall example is helpful to demonstrating how to create progress within a voluntary framework. Most successful mediation processes have this characteristic, but the Shared Strategy has effectively illustrated the kinds of tools and structures that can be helpful in achieving significant policy change and a new way of doing business—all through a voluntary program, albeit one that knits together existing regulatory programs with voluntary action to work towards the same goals.

14. Sponsorship

Earlier in this analysis we discussed linkages and attachments of the change process, its coordinating entity, and governing leaders to institutions that have regulatory authority or other formal interests in the outcome of the process. Here we add a slightly different category, that of “sponsors,” those that would have to approve or finance the outcome. Not all of those with whom linkages are necessary are sponsors in the sense of having the ability to authorize or pay for key activities in the planning and conflict resolution process and having the ability to approve the resolution, plan, or proposal, and potentially pay for its implementation. But, in many public policy conflict situations, the real interest and blessing of certain entities will be critical in starting a problem solving process and in implementing a solution. Without the sponsors’ agreement that the planning process was appropriate, the process would be at least suspect and uncertain, if not one that people might refuse to participate in. Without the agreement of the range of sponsors on the final submission, there would be no resolution. Determining the needed sponsors is likely to be a key aspect of developing the problem solving process, as well as the solution.

The fact that NOAA supported and was a key sponsor of the Shared Strategy process was particularly important, since NOAA was the agency with the primary authority to motivate action and determine the adequacy of the plan. Further, because of its mission and authority it was in a position to help fund important aspects of the planning and the implementation. Support from recognized tribal leaders was important because of, among other reasons, the authority that flowed from their treaty rights, which could have been affected, and related court

decisions, as well as the substantial scientific and legal resources they could bring to bear. Of course, the Governor's support and winning the support of departmental directors of key natural resource agencies were important to lending the Shared Strategy state authority and funding. Satisfaction with the process, and its results, by key members of the Congressional delegation and others in Congress was also necessary to obtain funding and create the potential for new legislation. Since local government would have to respond to the planning effort, in many cases with difficult decisions over many future decades, they also had to be considered among the needed sponsors.

The signatures of leaders from a representative group of these governmental bodies on the Port Ludlow agreement represented a formal sponsorship of the process—a protocol that the agreed upon process and its result would be taken seriously. Knowing that these entities with authority and resources would, in effect, “sponsor” the activity, pending a positive and agreed upon outcome, made it possible for the Shared Strategy entities to do the planning work, and for environmental leaders, leaders in business and agriculture, and others in local governments to see the process as having the potential for impact.

Sponsorship is different than governance or participation, such as on the Development Committee, or other negotiating group. Sponsorship, when sufficient, legitimizes the process and makes participation safe in that the result is being constructively anticipated by the entities with authority to enact or fund the process. However, the process must also be agreeable to groups who may not have formal authority, but whose cooperation is otherwise important to developing an effective plan or agreement that can be implemented. Of course, these non-sponsoring groups often have legal standing, like environmental groups.

If the process itself is not satisfactory to those in authority—the sponsors—the odds that the outcome will be satisfactory are much lower. A related development in this case, the Policy Work Group, created a way for most sponsoring entities to remain involved and informed. In other instances we are aware of, less formal communication with sponsoring agencies is sufficient to the circumstances, as it was in this case with the Congressional delegation. Having appropriate sponsors, and keeping in touch with them, are important ingredients to carrying out a collaborative process that serves as a supplement to normal regulatory actions and powers.

15. Structure roles and responsibilities to ensure balance and a new outcome

The Port Ludlow meetings included many individuals and institutions with historical disagreements. To enable these parties to work together productively, the Shared Strategy divided roles and responsibilities in a way that would ensure balance and also tap into each party's strengths. For example, the Shared Strategy board had fiduciary responsibility but no policy authority; the TRT had advisory and review roles but was not a final authority and had no direct policy role; the Policy Work Group was an advisory body that reviewed the watershed plans for policy value and consistency; the Development Committee/Recovery Council had policy responsibility; and the watersheds had planning responsibility.

Other features of the structure included giving membership of the main regulatory bodies and tribes on the Development Committee/Recovery Council equal status to environmental groups, farm interests, local government, and other stakeholders. Overall, the structure and roles of Shared Strategy redefined the relationships among agencies and many other parties so they could work together in a new way.

16. Maintain continuity and quality of leadership

Those involved in planning the Port Ludlow meetings and the signatory organizations to the Port Ludlow agreements later became involved in the planning structure, including the Policy Work Group, the TRT, the Development Committee, and the board of directors. This continuity meant that the “legislative history” of the agreement was known and the individuals involved were in a better position to make progress.

In significant ways, continuity can also be found in the transition from the Shared Strategy to the PSP. The Recovery Council and its relationship to the watershed leads group and the 14 watersheds have remained largely intact under the PSP. This should ensure continuation of the commitments to local plans and regional coordination. However, the dissolution of the Shared Strategy, which was planned at Port Ludlow, created potential discontinuity in several respects. The departure of Kramer and his staff left a significant void in organizational capacity, relationships, formal and informal knowledge of problems and opportunities, and, importantly, trust—sacrificing important sources of continuity. The new leadership and staff will have to re-earn that trust and gain the knowledge of this large and complex system.

However, in a testament to the work done by Kramer and the staff to build the infrastructure for decision making and conflict resolution that would allow for implementation and continued progress on plans, the most important elements of continuity were in place. These elements no longer depended on personalities or on the initiative of the central Shared Strategy staff. Just as Ruckelshaus and Kramer had intended and planned, the infrastructure of local and regional relationships and mechanisms for policy making and problem solving provided their own continuity. This continuity served to allow the important effort to transition to the larger Puget Sound Partnership.

In one important piece of continuity, William Ruckelshaus became chair of the PSP Leadership Council, overseeing the effort.¹⁸ In another, the staff director selected to oversee salmon

¹⁸ When Ruckelshaus resigned from the Recovery Council to become the chairman of the Leadership Council of the new Puget Sound Partnership, he was succeeded as chair of the Recovery Council by Darlene Kordonowy, Mayor of Bainbridge Island and Kevin Ranker, San Juan County Council member, as co-chairs. Steve Tharinger, a county commissioner, who had long chaired the Dungeness River Management Team, 1 of the 14 watershed planning groups, and who had also been a member of the Recovery Council, became head of the SRF Board. Tharinger also became a member of the Ecology Coordinating Board of the Puget Sound Partnership.

recovery implementation, Joe Ryan, had been on the Recovery Council for several years. Finally, the executive director of the PSP, David Dicks, had been a consultant to the Shared Strategy at various points, and one of his key deputies, Martha Neuman, had been a highly respected watershed lead in one of the larger counties involved in the Shared Strategy process.

17. Maintain a top-down, bottom-up approach

Some have characterized the Shared Strategy as a bottom-up or grassroots approach, which it was in many ways. But the regional structure—including Kramer and staff, and the Development Committee/Recovery Council—provided significant support and direction, which set standards that affected the quality and timing of the plans and provided an infrastructure that could facilitate later implementation. This combination of approaches has been referred to as a “top-down, bottom-up approach.” The particular way in which it was intentionally applied here created an increasingly bottom-up structure that retained the ability to integrate and coordinate actions on a regional basis.

The top-down elements included establishing a governance structure with representation from the full range of stakeholders, imposing certain deadlines, providing a process to establish science-based goals, brokering the scientific input and review, ensuring policy review, helping to establish representation in the local watershed groups, developing political and financial strategies for the system, and strategic planning for the implementation phase. Bottom-up aspects included input on policy and process from the watershed leads and later the Watershed Leads group, relying on watershed planning groups for plan development, and local input to the regional level through the Development Committee. In addition, the entire process came about as a result of a broadly attended conference and agreements that emerged with broad consent.

18. Understand the political realities but avoid destabilizing or policy-diluting politics

To create a credible, effective, and scientifically supportable plan, the Shared Strategy effort had to be as free from politics as possible. On the other hand, to be effective, the plan had to be developed in a political context, with support, participation, and funding from elected officials. This required sophisticated understanding and interaction with the existing policy making system and the political considerations, among many other factors, that had long affected attempts at protecting salmon. The approach of the Shared Strategy process and structure illustrates potentially important lessons for working at the intersection of science, policy, and political authority

The Shared Strategy followed several rules to keep out inappropriate politics and engaged thoroughly and respectfully with elected and other policy officials. First, elected leaders were included and respected, and efforts were made to avoid magnifying the political tensions they face. Second, the governance system was transparent and included strong leaders from all constituencies who held the system accountable for performance. Third, the use of scientific standards and science review reduced the impact of politics. Fourth, Kramer, Ruckelshaus, and

other's extensive experience working in the political realm led them to take into account potential political reactions and consequences.

A mix of Democrats, Republicans, liberals, and conservatives was evident at every level. In more communities or forums that had been more typically populated by environmental groups and others with more "liberal" tendencies, the addition of farm leaders or real estate or other business interests often brought a change to the previous mix. In other communities, tribes and environmentalists were added to tables where they had been less visible. After initial posturing in some instances, most groups began focusing more on goals and less on political differences. The interim projects that led to recovery progress, such as improved habitat, were done in ways that also protected farmers' interests, helping to show how solutions that overcame rhetorical or partisan views could be developed.

Conclusion

Our research for this report, including extensive interviews and discussions with Shared Strategy participants and leaders, regulators, policy officials, and interested observers, indicates that the Shared Strategy significantly increased the Puget Sound region's capacity to address the issue of recovering endangered salmon species. Both in its approach and in its institutional features, it was able to address and largely overcome many key obstacles and conflicts that had stood in the way of previous salmon recovery efforts and the ability to respond to the ESA listing.

While the process and its result are acknowledged to be imperfect, the Shared Strategy has bequeathed to the Puget Sound Partnership a strong foundation of collaborative processes and relationships, coordinating structures, and other mechanisms that will help serve the PSP and the local watersheds during the implementation phase as the regional recovery plan is further refined. While both participants and observers recognize areas needing attention, and have questions and concerns about meeting the remaining challenges, there is widespread agreement, with which this report concurs, that a substantial and valuable infrastructure for implementation and further policy development has been put in place. This occurred because of leadership and careful thought exercised at many levels, using classic conflict resolution practices, adding, in new combinations, known means of conflict resolution and structures, and developing new practices to meet these challenges.

The Shared Strategy's innovative combination of tools, approaches, and guiding principles can serve as a model, and perhaps as a vehicle, for policy makers and leaders as they tackle other complex resource management issues that involve diverse economic and environmental interests, multiple levels and jurisdictions of government, as well as private and nonprofit parties and longstanding antagonisms. It is our hope that this early-stage examination of the Shared Strategy will serve not only as a historical record of the effort but also as a resource that can inform future efforts and contribute to their success.

The interested reader can gain a more complete perspective by examining the following full report, which incorporates and expands upon the information in this summary. The full report can serve as a basis for further evaluation of the Shared Strategy results as biological evidence becomes available and as further work of the Puget Sound Partnership continues.

The Shared Strategy for Puget Sound: A Description and Initial Assessment

(Draft)

June 30, 2008

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Introduction

This report offers a description and a preliminary assessment of the developmental, structural, conflict resolution-related, governance, and managerial aspects of the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound, a salmon recovery planning effort in Puget Sound in northwest Washington State. This effort, which spanned roughly from 1999 to 2007, was initiated in response to the listing of Puget Sound Chinook salmon as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on March 24, 1999, and produced a NOAA-approved salmon recovery plan. Given the varied results of past endangered species recovery efforts,¹⁹ the Shared Strategy merits examination as a potential model of a collaborative process for resolving a controversial policy issue.²⁰

This report was not intended to address the biological results of the effort—we won't know for several decades whether the Shared Strategy will have helped to recover salmon populations in Puget Sound. Rather, it examines the approach taken to develop a strategy for endangered species recovery, and how it might apply to regional plans that address other complex resource management issues involving divergent economic and environmental interests, scientific data, policy, and politics. Such an examination at this early stage allows us to capture the details and nuances of the structure and process that would be more difficult to reconstruct with the passage of time.

In this light, we will examine two primary questions:

- Has the Shared Strategy increased the capacity of the Puget Sound region to effectively work toward salmon recovery?
- If so, what lessons or ideas can be drawn from the Shared Strategy effort that would be of help in addressing other resource management issues or conflicts?

¹⁹ Jonathan M. Hoekstra, J. Alan Clark, William F. Fagan, and P. Dee Boersma. "A Comprehensive Review of Endangered Species Act Recovery Plans." *Ecological Applications*, Vol. 12, No. 3; pp. 630-640. June 2002.

²⁰ This report is focused on what can be learned about developing natural resource policy and management mechanisms by examining the work of the Shared Strategy effort in Puget Sound. It does not attempt to second guess or evaluate NOAA's acceptance of the salmon recovery plan, or otherwise evaluate the scientific quality of the watershed plans. The biological results of the Shared Strategy salmon recovery plan will not be known for several decades and any evaluation of the biological adequacy of the plan would require a different type of review. Rather, this report focuses on the development and efficacy of the conflict resolution and institutional development strategies and mechanisms that resulted in an approved salmon recovery plan, an implementation structure, and greatly increased funding.

Our research suggests that the Shared Strategy has significantly increased the regional capacity to address key problems and blockages in the system of policy making, funding, action, coordination, and decision making related to salmon recovery.²¹ This report outlines and describes the institutions, relationships, coordinating structures, and other features that the Shared Strategy put in place. Many of these features did not previously exist or did not exist in a form appropriate to the task.

The infrastructure created by the Shared Strategy has been bequeathed to the successor effort, the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), which has broadened the scope of this regional collaboration to encompass other ecosystem issues in the Puget Sound, and is reasonably well funded.²²

While many challenges and uncertainties remain, the many community-level and regional planning, decision-making, and coordinating groups that have been developed represent a significant addition to the capacity to clean up Puget Sound and recover endangered salmon species.²³

The major elements of the Shared Strategy infrastructure are as follows:

- Local watershed planning groups that bring state agencies and local governments as well as environmental, agricultural, and tribal interests to the same table, with established goals and ground rules for interaction
- A coordinating council that links the 14 watershed planning groups
- An overarching regional decision-making body

²¹ The descriptions in this report draw from more than 100 focused conversations (including 60 formal interviews) with Shared Strategy participants and close observers, attendance at dozens of meetings of the Shared Strategy planning and decision-making bodies (including some watershed groups), extensive examination of Shared Strategy reports and archives, and examination of dozens of other examples of resource recovery in the Northwest and elsewhere in the country.

²² In 2005, Governor Gregoire pledged to restore Puget Sound to a clean and healthy condition by 2020. In April 2006 the legislature approved funding (\$20 million) to start this initiative. On May 7, 2007 Governor Gregoire signed SB 5372, an act creating the Puget Sound Partnership. The Puget Sound Partnership is a state agency responsible for developing an “Action Agenda” by December 1, 2008 that will put the Puget Sound on the path to health by 2020. The Shared Strategy organization officially disbanded at the end of 2007. Budget shortfalls due to recessionary conditions that began to emerge in late 2008 threatened the continuation of amounts at the intended levels.

²³ Although three salmonid species—the Puget Sound Chinook, Hood Canal Summer Chum, and Bull Trout—were listed as threatened in March 1999, the Shared Strategy focused solely on recovery of Chinook salmon because other recovery efforts were already underway for the Hood Canal Summer Chum and Bull Trout. These efforts are explained in greater detail in the background and history section of this report.

- Coordination with and among federal, tribal, state, and local governmental functions
- Effective and trusted mechanisms for coordination among participating groups and for distributing tasks and decisions to the appropriate levels, as well as for collaboration across these levels
- Use of scientific data and assessments to assist in decision making
- Priority setting based on regional, rather than purely local, needs

This report will describe the Shared Strategy infrastructure and its key features, including the often innovative combinations of tools and structures used. In the process, we will highlight features that can be of use to policy makers and community leaders in other settings. In particular, it is helpful to notice the parallels between the challenges facing policy makers and community members around salmon recovery and the challenges around other vexing issues that cross geographic, political, ideological, economic, and environmental lines—for example, transportation, water, land use, and others.

Five other areas of Washington State developed salmon recovery plans under the ESA listing, most of which also used local groups in the development of the plan and applied many innovative and interesting techniques. Because it encompasses a great variety of complex issues and interests, this study focuses only on the effort in the Puget Sound area—although studies of the other efforts and a comparison would be valuable.²⁴

Some of the challenges around the salmon recovery issue that also appear to characterize other policy areas include:

Regulatory power and requirements come from different laws, and both resources and regulatory authority come from several sources and levels of government.

Lack of coordinated authority to address the problem. Since, authority and resources lie in several federal, tribal, state, and local agencies with different missions and approaches, prioritization and leadership coordination is made more difficult. These divisions are found in many areas of policy making and resource management.

²⁴ The eight salmon recovery regions in Washington are: Hood Canal, Lower Columbia River, Middle Columbia River, Northeast Washington, Puget Sound, Snake River, Upper Columbia River, and Washington Coastal. A map and description of the recovery regions can be found on the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) website: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/gsro/regions/default.asp>.

Existing conflicts and mistrust. Major regional and local players have a history of conflict over the issues, with significant instability and uncertainty as a result, often in the form of protracted legal, legislative, or public relations battles.

Lack of an adequate forum for cooperation. No agency, institution, or forum is trusted to be an unbiased coordinating body, and no sanctioned or safe place exists where a sufficient range of parties can take their concerns or ideas without significant risk, or with a reasonable expectation that concerns will receive fair and appropriate attention.

Knowledge gaps. Access to reliable scientific resources is lacking, or the available scientific resources are insufficiently understood or used.

The Shared Strategy effort combined the energies of people who had experienced many of these challenges in past attempts to address salmon recovery. To the extent that they were able to address these challenges, the Shared Strategy effort may at least hold valuable lessons for policy makers in this and other areas of policy conflict, representing one of the most sophisticated recent achievements in addressing large scale policy conflicts

This report begins by describing the history of the issue, including earlier attempts at salmon recovery in the Puget Sound region. It then describes the structure and tools used by the Shared Strategy. Finally, it discusses potentially useful lessons for policy makers, community leaders, and scholars. In doing so, we have attempted to create a detailed record that can be used in the future to further evaluate the Shared Strategy in the light of its impact on salmon recovery.

The descriptions in this report draw from more than 100 focused conversations (including 60 formal interviews) with Shared Strategy participants and close observers, attendance at dozens of meetings of the Shared Strategy planning and decision-making bodies (including some watershed groups), extensive examination of Shared Strategy reports and archives, and examination of dozens of other examples of resource recovery in the Northwest and elsewhere in the country.

Salmon Recovery in the Puget Sound: The Historical Backdrop

In March of 1999, NOAA designated the Puget Sound Chinook salmon as threatened under the ESA.²⁵ The ESA listing galvanized leaders and institutions in the Puget Sound region to seek a way to help recover the salmon population. These efforts were complicated by the widespread potential impact of recovery activities and the large and varied geography, economy, and ecology of Puget Sound.

Some of the earliest formal activities in response to the listing were at the state level. In 1998, in anticipation of the listing, the state legislature passed the Watershed Planning Act (ESHB 2514), which provided a structure and funding incentive to support voluntary planning for water resource management, including in-stream flows. The Salmon Recovery Planning Act (ESHB 2496), also passed in 1998, created the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) to coordinate a statewide strategy for recovering salmon populations to healthy and harvestable levels. The Salmon Recovery Funding Act (2ESSB 5595), passed in 1999, created the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRF Board) to promote public oversight of funding for salmon recovery and provide a coordinated state funding process. The timeline in Appendix B shows many of these events.

At the local level, three counties (King, Pierce, and Snohomish) joined in a multi-jurisdictional response to the ESA listing of Puget Sound Chinook and Bull Trout.²⁶ The Tri-County salmon recovery effort created an early action plan in the areas of road maintenance, storm water, and land management. The Tri-County plan was designed partially to reduce the regulatory liability of the local governments and provide local jurisdictions with a variety of options for complying with the ESA.

Other concerned leaders undertook less formal activities. For example, EPA founding administrator, William Ruckelshaus; former Washington State governor and senator, Daniel J. Evans; and Billy Frank, Jr., of the Nisqually Tribe, who headed the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) were among those who brought together disparate interests to share their

²⁵ In the early 1990s, NOAA received several petitions to list numerous West Coast Pacific salmon populations, including three in the Puget Sound, as threatened under the ESA. NOAA initiated a status review in 1994 of all Pacific salmon populations, or evolutionarily significant units (ESUs), to determine whether the listings were warranted. In March 1998, NOAA announced its preliminary intent to list Puget Sound Chinook, Hood Canal Summer Chum, and Bull Trout as threatened, with one year to reach a final decision. All three were listed in March 1999.

²⁶ The Tri-County process did not address Hood Canal Summer Chum as they do not have habitat in the tri-county region.

concerns about the ESA listing and its potential impact.²⁷ Many in business, agriculture, and local governments were wary of the federal government's power to fundamentally change their way of doing things. Many who were following the salmon listings were concerned about the consequences of the 1990 ESA listing of the Northern Spotted Owl on the timber industry and rural communities. Even many of those who welcomed such intervention on the federal level were concerned about the largely unsuccessful record of imposed federal ESA solutions. These informal discussions revealed that there was no existing entity with sufficient reach, expertise, or perceived neutrality that could oversee a regional recovery effort. It was through these discussions that the idea for the Shared Strategy evolved.

The Shared Strategy came to draw heavily upon several early efforts at local collaboration on this issue—including tribal and state fisheries co-management, state watershed and salmon recovery planning legislation, and the Tri-County Salmon Recovery Effort. A number of prominent leaders and staff in each of these efforts later become instrumental in the Shared Strategy. These important precursor efforts are detailed in the following sections.²⁸

Tribal Co-Management of Fisheries

An important pre-listing component of salmon recovery planning efforts in the Puget Sound region was the tribal co-management of fisheries. Co-management means that the tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) are jointly responsible for planning and managing fisheries and hatchery programs, through annual agreements on salmon fishing seasons, harvests, and hatchery production goals in Puget Sound and the Washington coast. The beginnings of this relationship were difficult, and it took many years to develop a widely accepted process. The relatively advanced state of this relationship in 1998 appears to have contributed to constructive engagement in the kinds of challenging discussions that followed the ESA listing.

Under treaties signed with the tribes in the mid-1800s, federal and state government agencies must uphold policies to protect the salmon fishing rights of Indian tribes.²⁹ Although the treaties

²⁷ Many leaders in the region were involved in various ways in trying to craft a regional response. It would be impossible to completely and accurately identify all of them and their contributions in each instance, so we simply include the names of those most frequently acknowledged and apologize to anyone not named or not named in proportion to their contribution.

²⁸ Although three salmonid species—the Puget Sound Chinook, Hood Canal Summer Chum, and Bull Trout—were listed as threatened in March 1999, the Shared Strategy ultimately chose to focus solely on the recovery of Chinook salmon because other recovery efforts were already underway for the Hood Canal Summer Chum and Bull Trout.

²⁹ *Treaty of February 22, 1819, 8 Stat. 252*: The United States claimed the area now embraced within the State of Washington. *Act of August 14, 1848, 9 Stat. 323*: The United States established the Oregon Territory and provided that nothing contained in the act “shall be construed to impair the rights of person

removed from their control much land that was previously tribal, it guaranteed the treaty tribes access to “usual and accustomed” areas for harvest. In 1974, the United States and the treaty tribes sued the State of Washington, WDFW (then the Washington State Department of Fisheries), and the State Game Commission over the treaties’ fishing rights (*United States v. Washington*, 1974). In the famous “Boldt” Decision, Judge George Boldt of the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington affirmed that the tribes had the rights to fish and to take up to 50% of the harvestable fish at all “usual and accustomed grounds.”³⁰

Despite the decision, the state and the tribes were involved in bitter conflicts over tribal allocation of fish for many years. In 1979, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the Boldt Decision. In the years immediately following the decision, a variety of conflict resolution mechanisms were discussed and attempted, with limited success. However, one result was that the treaty tribes (represented by the NWIFC) and WDFW developed a process to cooperatively manage Puget Sound salmon fisheries.

The co-management relationship allows the tribal and state fisheries managers to jointly address management of the salmon fishery through the annual setting of harvest allocations without resorting to litigation and court decisions (as was common in the past). They collect and examine common data and set annual plans collaboratively. Similarly, the NWIFC provides the tribes with an established forum to work cooperatively to solve intertribal conflicts and otherwise see to tribal fishing rights and engage in activities to protect the resource.

The Shared Strategy successfully built on the relationships that had evolved over two decades of fisheries co-management. In addition to constructive working relationships, there was in place a

or property now pertaining to the Indians in said Territory, so long as such rights shall remain unextinguished by treaty between the United States and such Indians.” Throughout the treaty negotiations, the Indians’ primary concern was that they have freedom to move about to gather food, particularly salmon, at their usual and accustomed fishing places. Indians lifestyles were heavily dependent on harvesting anadromous fish. Thus, Indians were assured by Governor Stevens and the treaty commissioners that they would be allowed to fish, but so would the white man. In 1856, the U.S. Government felt that the development of non-Indian fisheries in the case area would not interfere with the subsistence of the Indians. The intention of the United States government when negotiating treaties with the Indians was to diversify the Indian economy by making non-coastal tribes agriculturalists, teaching Western skills and trades, and transitioning them into Western culture. However, there was no intent to prevent the Indians from using fisheries for economic gain (i.e., Treaty of Medicine Creek, Treaty of Point Elliott, Treaty of Point No Point, Treaty with the Makahs [Treaty of Neah Bay], and Treaty of the Yakimas). *Honorable George H. Boldt. United States District Court for the Western District of Washington, Tacoma Division. 384 F. Supp. 312; 1974 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 12291.*

³⁰ Ibid.

network of scientists and others both in the tribes and in WDFW who had dealt with thorny issues of salmon management and recovery.

The extent of tribal expertise was not well known to many of those who later became involved in the Shared Strategy. Much of this expertise resided in individual tribes, as well as in the NWIFC. Thus, the state and the tribes were able to come to the Shared Strategy table with a pre-existing relationship and means to carry on management of the fishery, and with other resources that allowed them to play a significantly more effective and unified role.

State Watershed and Salmon Recovery Legislation

The State of Washington passed three key pieces of legislation in the late 1990s in response to recent ESA listing, as mentioned earlier: the Watershed Planning Act of 1998 (RCW 90.82, ESHB 2514), the Salmon Recovery Planning Act of 1998 (RCW 77.85, ESHB 2496), and the Salmon Recovery Funding Act of 1999 (RCW 77.85, 2ESSB 5595). These became important building blocks for later salmon recovery planning and funding.

WATERSHED PLANNING ACT (ESHB 2514)

The Watershed Planning Act of 1998 established a framework under which local watershed-based groups can voluntarily come together to conduct locally-driven water resource planning under state guidance and with state funding (administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology). The legislation provides a planning framework and financial assistance as incentives for participation. Only groups that formally organize under EHB 2514 rules are eligible to apply for Ecology funding, which can be up to \$250,000 during the first two-year period of planning, with a maximum allocation of \$500,000 for each Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA).

Watershed planning groups that voluntarily organize under ESHB 2514 must include all counties within their WRIA,³¹ as well as the largest city and the water utility with the largest water right in the WRIA. Groups are also encouraged to form multi-WRIA watershed planning groups, but they still must include all counties, the largest city, and the largest water utility in each WRIA. Groups are required to invite all tribes with reservation lands within the WRIA or multi-WRIA area, but they can conduct planning without the tribes if the tribes choose not to participate. Groups are not required to include any other interests (such as agriculture, timber, or development), but many have done so.

According to ESHB 2514, watershed plans must address water quantity issues. They may also address water quality and habitat, as well in-stream flows in rivers and streams. Although the

³¹ Washington has 62 WRIsAs. The original WRIA boundaries were established jointly by Ecology, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and WDFW in 1970 and were updated in 1998 and 2000.

Watershed Planning Act is not specifically directed at salmon habitat or the recovery of threatened salmon species, its focus on general watershed management addresses important factors that affect salmon health as they enter river systems to spawn.

The Shared Strategy was able to use the structure established by ESHB 2514 by incorporating relevant content of watershed plans into local salmon recovery plans. For example, if a watershed chose to address habitat in its watershed plan, the Shared Strategy would collaborate with the watershed planning group to create a consistent habitat strategy between the watershed plan and salmon recovery plans. However, the Watershed Planning Act's structure was not the primary one used by watershed groups working with the Shared Strategy; most of them used the process established under the Salmon Recovery Planning Act.

SALMON RECOVERY PLANNING ACT (ESHB 2496)

The Salmon Recovery Planning Act of 1998 created the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO). The GSRO is responsible for developing and coordinating an overall state salmon strategy. According to ESHB 2496, "The primary purpose of the office is to coordinate and assist in the development, implementation, and revision of regional salmon recovery plans."³² Thus, in most cases the watershed groups that produced plans under the Shared Strategy worked under the ESHB 2496 process.

The intent of the Salmon Recovery Planning Act was for the state to be in control of its own salmon recovery efforts. Some argued that the federal government should not list salmon as an endangered species if the state demonstrated that it was taking effective action to address salmon population issues. Others thought the listing would be helpful in spurring recovery under any scenario. However, ESHB 2496's reliance on voluntary action and focus on the local, not regional, level might have put additional pressure on the federal government to list salmon as endangered.³³

ESHB 2496 authorized "lead entities"—local administrative bodies designated by a joint agreement between a county, its largest city, and the nearest tribe—to coordinate local projects and distribute funding. The lead entity can be a county, city, conservation district, special district, tribal government, or other entity. Lead entities are responsible for submitting a list of prioritized projects, known as a *habitat project list*, to the SRF Board for funding consideration.³⁴ Only lead entities are authorized to submit funding requests on behalf of various project

³² This purpose statement is the result of statutory changes since 1998 (RCW 77.85.030).

³³ Interviews in 2007 and 2008 with various government staff who were involved in the discussions at the time.

³⁴ The Salmon Recovery Planning Act (ESHB 2496) did not include the SRF Board when originally passed in 1998. However, in 1999 ESHB 2496 was amended and the SRF Board was added.

sponsors, which typically include land trusts, WDFW, private groups, and regional fisheries enhancement groups.³⁵

ESHB 2496 also requires that lead entities create a technical committee and a citizen committee to review and rank restoration projects before they are sent to the SRF Board. The technical committee evaluates the technical merit of each project, while the citizen body evaluates its social, political, and economic viability. This part of the process is meant to ensure that local technical experts and local citizens support the proposed projects. The lead entities also work with their technical and citizen committees to develop a biological strategy for prioritizing projects within their geographic areas. Therefore, in watersheds where recovery plans were produced under the ESHB 2496 process the technical and citizen committees were involved in the Shared Strategy process.

THE SALMON RECOVERY FUNDING ACT (2ESSB 5595)

The Salmon Recovery Funding Act (2ESSB 5595) of 1999 created the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRF Board), which allocates funds appropriated by the State of Washington and the U.S. Congress for salmon habitat restoration projects.³⁶³⁷ These projects created an early emphasis on habitat restoration, local problem solving, on-the-ground salmon recovery projects, and increasingly rigorous scientific and policy evaluation. The Salmon Recovery Funding Act is described in more detail later in the report.

JOINT NATURAL RESOURCES CABINET AND GOVERNOR'S SALMON RECOVERY OFFICE

JNRC was created by Governor Gary Locke in 1997 with the following directions and actions:³⁸

³⁵ According to the statute, “The area covered by the habitat project list must be based at a minimum on a WRIA, combination of WRIAs, an ESU, or any other area agreed to by the counties, cities, and tribes.” Thus, the geographic scope of a lead entity can extend beyond WRIA boundaries, which is not the case with watershed planning groups under ESHB 2514.

³⁶ The Salmon Recovery Funding Act of 1999 (RCW 77.85, 2ESSB 5595).

³⁷ The six-member SRF Board is appointed by the governor and five state agency directors, and William Ruckelshaus served as the initial chair.

³⁸ State of Washington, signed by Jennifer M. Belcher (Commissioner of Public Lands), Gary Locke (Governor), Bern Shanks (Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife), Tom Fitzsimmons (Director, Department of Ecology), Sid Morrison (Secretary, Department of Transportation), Jim Nesernig (Director, Department of Agriculture), Cleve Pinnix (Director, Parks and Recreation Commission), Bruce Miyahara (Secretary, Department of Health), Nancy McKay (Chair, Puget Sound Water), Tim Douglas (Director, Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development), Laura Johnson (Director, Interagency Agency for Outdoor Recreation), Ken Casavant (Washington Member, Northwest Power Planning Council), Steve Meyer (Executive Director, Conservation Commission), Mike Kreidler (Washington Member,

1. Serve as the state's formal and ongoing institutional framework to promote interagency communication, coordination, and policy direction on environmental and natural resource issues.
2. It was to be chaired by the Governor's Policy Director and will provide recommendations and policy direction for member agencies. JNRC shall provide oversight of agency staff working on issues identified by the JNRC.
3. The cabinet was to focus on water, ESA, Columbia-Snake River issues, and watershed based management.
4. The cabinet was composed of Directors of State agencies, or equivalent. Each agency representative shall designate staff to participate in work groups by the cabinet.

The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO), created by the Salmon Recovery Planning Act (ESHB 2496) of 1998, was a statutory creation by legislature and created as a part of the Governor's office. GSRO staffed the Governor's Joint Natural Resources Cabinet (JNRC). In practice, the GSRO provided policy guidance for the JNRC office. Ultimately, the state strategy for salmon recovery was based on policy decisions made by JNRC, and therefore heavily informed by GSRO. In essence, JNRC functioned as an executive board for GSRO, although this language was not used.³⁹

Twelve state agencies were represented on the JNRC because of their direct effect on salmon (including Ecology, WDFW, and the Department of Natural Resources) or indirect effect (including the Department of Transportation and Department of Health). Smith was appointed chair of the JNRC.

JNRC developed (with GSRO as staff) the "Statewide Strategy to Recover Salmon" (SSRS). This was to guide how salmon recovery was to occur in Washington, and set minimum standards for recovery plans to achieve. The JNRC considered three approaches to developing a statewide strategy for salmon recovery:

Sector-based approach. Each industry would be responsible for developing an ESA plan. The Timber, Fish, and Wildlife Agreement (TFW), a plan under development with standards for timber managers to comply with the ESA, Clean Water Act, and the Washington Forest Practices Act, was considered a potential model for other sectors, such as agriculture and municipal roads. In the end, however, TFW was the only such plan ever completed.

Northwest Power Planning Council). Memorandum of Agreement Establishing the Joint Natural Resources Cabinet. May 16, 1997.

³⁹ Interviews with staff in 2008.

Watershed-based approach. Each WRIA or multi-WRIA area with a watershed planning group under the Watershed Planning Act (ESHB 2514) would be responsible for developing an ESA plan.

Region-based approach. Each geographic area representing an evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) would be responsible for developing an ESA plan. An ESU is the geographical scale used by the listing agencies (in this case NOAA) to distinguish salmon and Bull Trout populations, respectively, that share similar genetic, ecological, and life history traits, but differ in important ways from salmon/Bull Trout in other ESUs.⁴⁰ Seven ESU regions in the state were actively engaged in recovery planning for listed salmonid species—Puget Sound, Hood Canal, Upper Columbia, Middle Columbia, Lower Columbia, Snake River, Northeast Washington,⁴¹ and Washington Coastal—and each region had a different organizing body (regional board) leading the process. For the Puget Sound region, the organizing body was the Shared Strategy.

This SSRS set a “bar” for the ESU scale efforts, regional recovery plans had to have a goal of recovering salmon populations to healthy and harvestable levels and restoring the habitat on which the fish relied. The SSRS also said the most effective way to achieve recovery plans, and achieve recovery, was by a ground up, locally driven, ESU scale approach.⁴² Thus, the region-based approach (outlined above) appeared most promising.

Puget Sound Water Quality Authority

Although not recent, the experience of the Puget Sound Water Quality Authority, a state entity created to promote the cleanup of Puget Sound, may have affected some of the prevailing views about salmon recovery work in the region.⁴³ The Authority was established in 1985 through

⁴⁰ Shared Strategy For Puget Sound: <http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/faq.htm>

⁴¹ Although Northeast Washington is a separate recovery region, it is not actively engaged in salmon recovery planning. Bull Trout is the listed species in this region and has a draft recovery plan that was completed overtime by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service without local involvement. Locals in northeast Washington debated, and eventually rejected, an active approach to engaging in recovery planning.

⁴² Statewide Strategy to Recover Salmon, Summary pg III.29 and RCW 77.85.005

⁴³ The authors of this report had access to the records of the Governor’s Review Committee, which performed the statutory 5-year sunset review of the Puget Sound Water Quality Authority in November of 1989. The committee that produced the sunset review interviewed business, environmental, municipal, legislative, and other leaders, as well as those who had been on the governor’s staff and Puget Sound Water Quality Authority staff during the period in question. The study team has also considered later observations about reactions to the Puget Sound Action Team. See also the case study “The Puget Sound Water Quality Authority” (A) and (B) on the Electronic Hallway, <http://www.hallway.org>.

legislation introduced by Governor Booth Gardner. By the early 1990s, it had been pared down through successive legislative actions to a coordinating office within the Department of Ecology. Although it brought concern about the health of the Sound into public view and fostered awareness in government and the broader community about the impact of human activity on the Sound, the Authority attracted significant opposition from business, municipal, and other entities over—among other things—its proposals for a centralized approach to Sound-wide environmental planning.

The Authority, which was later renamed the Puget Sound Action Team as it became a small office rather than an independent agency, became generally well regarded by those involved in activities for Puget Sound protection, but its role was much more limited than its original charter as the Authority. However, many constituencies remained wary of any centralized government entity with authority to impose its views on Puget Sound cleanup. Quite apart from the specific experience of the Authority, this reflected the highly diverse nature of the communities of interest that would be affected by Puget Sound salmon recovery and their concern over yielding authority to a centralized decision-making entity.

Early Regional Leadership Meetings

Puget Sound leaders reacted to the expected ESA listing by holding a series of self-initiated regional meetings to discuss its potential economic and social ramifications. The first of these meetings was the featured session at the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce's annual Leadership Conference in 1998. The conference was co-chaired by Christine Gregoire, then Washington's attorney general, and William Ruckelshaus. The conference brought together prominent Seattle-area business and political leaders for three days of meetings and workshops about ESA requirements and the state of the science on salmon decline. The conference included opportunities for high-level discussion among elected officials and others representing business and environmental groups.

Many businesses and property owners voiced concern that ESA prohibitions would restrict their ability to develop and use their land or engage in essential business activities. There was also a general concern about meaningful stakeholder involvement and local input into the development of a recovery plan, as well as skepticism that the federal government would adequately address local concerns.

Following the conference, many of those involved expected that Governor Locke would take a prominent leadership role. But it appears that the governor was strongly advised of the risks, complexity, and limits of state leadership in this effort; he chose instead to focus his efforts at the state level through the work of the JNRC and GSRO. He also supported the Salmon Recovery Funding Act (ESHB 2496) and its funding and encouraged Ruckelshaus and others in their efforts.

Because the issue of salmon recovery involved multiple agencies and actors, there was no obvious locus of responsibility. The governor's advisors and others believed that the state did

not have the necessary authority to address all facets of the issue—particularly because of extensive local land use and other policies, tribal authority over fishing, and other factors.

This situation prompted Ruckelshaus, who had been in touch with the governor and prominent tribal, state and local officials, to form and lead an informal working group of environmental and business leaders called the Puget Sound Business Environmental Forum, which would seek a way for the region to create its own salmon recovery plan. Some participants said their initial goal was to find an approach that could serve as a platform for the governor’s leadership. The working group met for most of 1998 but was unable to reach agreement on substantive action. The group disbanded in 1999 when NOAA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) formally designated the Puget Sound Chinook, Hood Canal Summer Chum, and Bull Trout as threatened. Many members of this business and environmental working group remained later became involved in the Shared Strategy.⁴⁴

Tri-County Salmon Recovery Effort

The Tri-County Salmon Recovery Effort, which had many features that were later incorporated into the Shared Strategy, involved three of the 12 Puget Sound counties: King County, Pierce County, and Snohomish County.⁴⁵ The three county executives—Ron Sims (King), Doug Sutherland (Pierce), and Bob Drewel (Snohomish)—decided to take a proactive, cooperative approach to addressing the ESA listing of Puget Sound Chinook and Bull Trout rather than wait for restrictions and mandates from the federal government.⁴⁶

The three contiguous counties had to recognize shared impacts, coordinate governments in different jurisdictions with shared ecosystems, jointly seek funds and other support from the state and federal governments, and seek to demonstrate to NOAA that they could control their own destiny and still meet the ESA listing requirements. They also reached outside county government to environmental and agricultural groups, tribal governments, city governments, and others.

In one sense, the Tri-County effort was a direct response to the “4(d) rule.” Section 4(d) of the ESA directs NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (commonly referred to as NMFS or NOAA

⁴⁴ This section benefited from interviews with individuals involved in these early informal working group meetings, close observers, and state agency staff and advisers to the governor.

⁴⁵ The description of the Tri-County effort is based on interviews with two of the three county executives involved; several county, state agency and tribal staff members who were involved in or aware of the Tri-County effort; and NOAA staff who reviewed and had interaction with the counties’ work. It also draws on documentation and reports about the work performed and the Tri-County Model 4(d) Rule Response Proposal of May 2001.

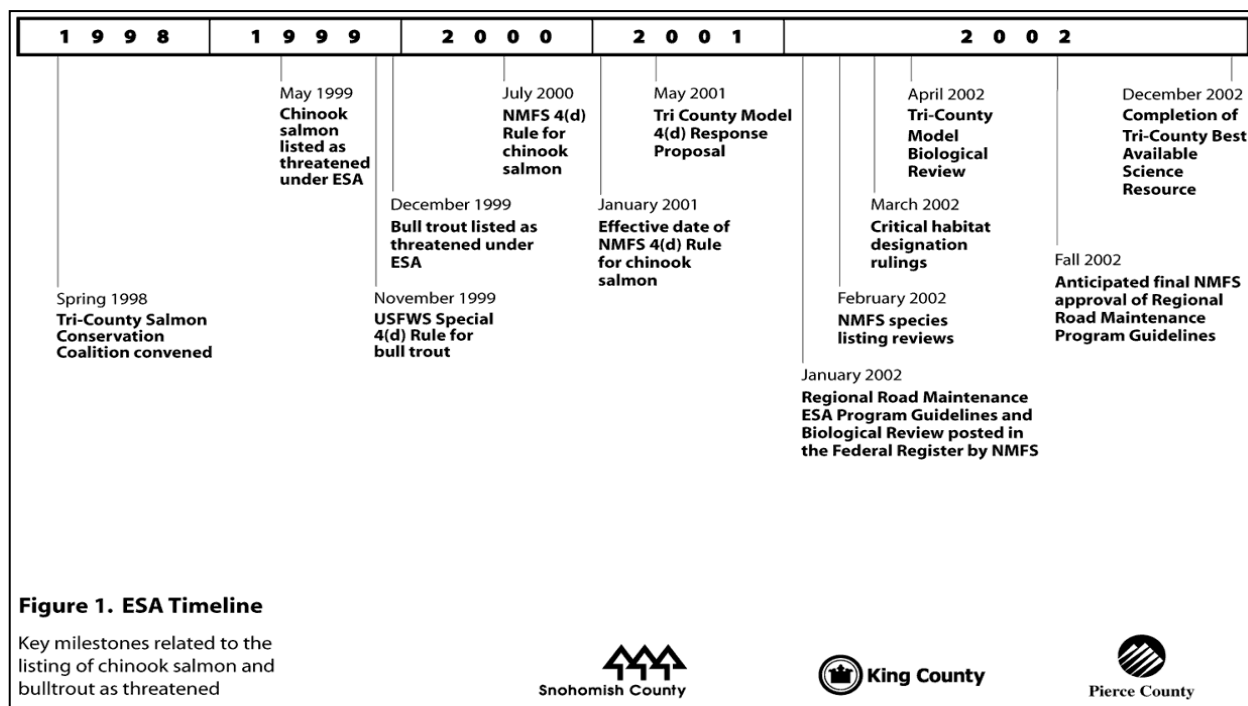
⁴⁶ The Chinook and Bull Trout were the only listed species with habitat in the Tri-County region.

Fisheries) to issue regulations to conserve species listed as threatened.⁴⁷ The 4(d) rule applies particularly to “take,” which can include any act that kills or injures fish, including habitat modification.⁴⁸ After NOAA established its Section 4(d) rule for Puget Sound Chinook, any entity became free to sue any other entity for “take” of species. County executives were concerned about the possibility of endless lawsuits against local governments over policies such as wastewater and land use. Local business interests were also uncertain about the Section 4(d) rule’s consequences for regional economic growth.

The Tri-County effort’s goal was to coordinate local salmon recovery efforts under a plan called the Tri-County Model 4(d) Rule Response Proposal (hereafter referred to as the Model). If NOAA approved the Model, the county activities described in the plan would qualify for a take limit under the Section 4(d) rule that would exempt the governments from liability for incidental take of Chinook. In 1998, the three counties formed a collaborative working group called the Tri-County Salmon Conservation Coalition to develop the proposed Model. The figure below shows the Tri-County efforts in relation to key milestones at the federal level, such as the listing of Chinook and Bull Trout. Sims became the chair and became a passionate advocate of the recovery effort throughout the process, remaining significantly engaged during the later work of the Shared Strategy and the follow on efforts of the Puget Sound Partnership.

⁴⁷ NOAA. “ESA 4(d) Rules.” <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/ESA-Salmon-Regulations-Permits/4d-Rules/>.

⁴⁸ “Take” is broadly understood to mean “harass, harm, pursue, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect” or engage in “significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns.” See U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, “The Endangered Species Act of 1973.” <http://www.fws.gov/Endangered/esa.html>.



The Tri-County Salmon Conservation Coalition included more than 400 representatives of local, state, federal, and tribal governments and the business, environmental, agricultural, and forestry communities. The Tri-County leaders wanted to involve and gain the support of the broadest possible constituency to reduce the chance of litigation over the proposal in the future. A smaller Executive Committee of representatives of each participating group was created for planning and decision-making purposes. Many of the tribes were at first unwilling to participate because, as sovereign nations, they were wary of entering into negotiations with local governments.⁴⁹ They preferred instead to deal at the federal level on a government-to-government basis. This reflects their sovereign status and the fact that their treaties were with the federal government. However, a relationship between tribes and the state government has

⁴⁹ The tribes each had their own reaction to the Shared Strategy process, and are sovereign governments, so it is not really possible to refer to “the tribes” and capture the entire range of views, but we believe that these characterizations are generally true for the issue under discussion, based on conversations and interviews with many tribal leaders and staff who were involved in the Shared Strategy process. For convenience, we will refer to “the tribes,” but the reader should recognize that the tribes had some differences on various aspects of the Shared Strategy. Some became very supportive and involved, others involved periodically as they thought needed, and some critical.

emerged over time and is illustrated by the Centennial Accord⁵⁰ signed in 1989 and the Millennium Agreement⁵¹ signed in 1999.

In general, tribes in the Northwest have had a much more limited history with local governments and are in many instances, therefore, unsure of the ability or commitment of local governments, to adequately address their interests and treaty rights. The leadership and support of Billy Frank, Jr., of the Nisqually Tribe (who was chairman of the NWIFC); David Troutt of the Nisqually Tribe, who was executive director of the Nisqually River Council; and Terry Williams of the Tulalip Tribe (who was nationally active on environmental issues), and others helped bring tribes into the Tri-County process.

The major business and commerce interests represented in the process included the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties, the ports of Seattle and Tacoma, and The Boeing Company. The forestry industry had its own process to deal with ESA-listed species through the Timber, Fish, and Wildlife Agreement and mostly did not participate in the Tri-County process. (There is no indication that it was hostile to the Tri-County effort.)

Scientists from local, state, federal, and tribal governments and some private consulting firms were also involved in the Tri-County effort from the outset. They provided technical expertise from a variety of disciplines and were organized into technical committees to develop each program area of the Model.

The Model included three early action programs and three long-term action programs designed to protect and restore habitat functions sufficient to support sustainable, harvestable salmon populations.

The early action programs included:

⁵⁰ The Centennial Accord was executed between federally recognized Indian tribes of Washington and the State of Washington, to better achieve mutual goals through an improved relationship between sovereign governments. The accord provides a framework for the government-to-government relationship and implementation procedures to ensure execution of the relationships. See “Centennial Accord between the Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Washington State and the State of Washington” on the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs website:

<http://www.goia.wa.gov/Government-to-Government/Data/CentennialAccord.htm>.

⁵¹ The Millennium Agreement, signed by American Indian Nations and the State of Washington, institutionalized the government-to-government relationship in preparation for the new millennium. See “Institutionalizing the Government-to-Government Relationship in Preparation for the New Millennium” on the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs website:

<http://www.goia.wa.gov/Government-to-Government/Data/agreement.htm>.

- Land Management
- Storm Water Management
- Regional Road Maintenance ESA Program Guidelines

The long-term action programs included:

- Watershed-Based (WRIA) Salmon Conservation Planning
- Monitoring and Adaptive Management
- Habitat Acquisition and Restoration Funding Program

Although Sims reported that he was chosen as the leader because he was the newest of the county executives, others maintain that Sims and King County were tapped to head the effort primarily because King County, as the largest of the three counties, had an active and substantial staff working on or potentially available to work on these issues—and because of Sims’ interest in and leadership on the issue. For each of the first two years, the King County Department of Natural Resources provided \$6 million in funding; later it provided \$2 million a year until the Tri-County effort dissolved in 2003. The county executives also worked with their congressional representatives to obtain federal funding.

An independent biological review of the Model was conducted by the Parametrix consulting firm to determine whether the Model contributed sufficiently to the protection of existing habitat functions and the restoration of other habitat functions to support sustainable, harvestable salmon populations. The consultants also evaluated whether the Model was consistent with the ESA and the NOAA Fisheries 4(d) Rule for threatened salmon. The biological review found that the Model’s three early action programs would primarily maintain existing habitat conditions or minimize the effects of development on salmon habitat but would not substantially contribute to improving previously degraded habitat. It found that the Model’s long-term programs would address habitat restoration through the Habitat Funding and Acquisition Program, which would be guided in part by the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program and the Watershed Based (WRIA) Salmonid Conservation Planning Program.

Significantly, the consultants also found that the Model omitted implementation details such as planning and implementation commitments, adaptation of regulations to local conditions, funding sources, schedules, standards for quantifiable goals, and noncompliance response. Perhaps because of this lack of specificity and assurance that local jurisdictions would implement the Model as described, NOAA ultimately did not approve the Model for a take limit, although NOAA regional management responded positively to the counties’ efforts to be proactive and work across jurisdictional lines.

The Tri-County leaders began to hear from their scientists and transportation and land use experts that their approach to salmon recovery was too limited geographically and necessarily ignored factors in other parts of Puget Sound that affected the recovery of the species. The scientists pointed out that it was not possible to successfully recover only a limited habitat area

when the entire species was listed as threatened throughout the Puget Sound. It was reported anecdotally that one of President Bill Clinton's science advisors, who apparently supported the collaborative nature of the Tri-County effort, was said to have urged consideration of habitat issues beyond the three counties.

The Tri-County leaders ultimately concluded that their approach, indeed, needed to be expanded and that they would need the involvement of well-respected senior statesmen in the region with the ability to engage and unite diverse interests across the broader Puget Sound region. Sims thus approached William Ruckelshaus with the idea of taking salmon recovery efforts to the regional level.⁵²

NOAA and ESA Listings

Will Stelle, the NOAA regional administrator as the listing was being developed, and many former and current NOAA officials were aware of the history of conflict around ESA enforcement actions in Washington State, the bluntness of the tools available to the agency, and the poor track record nationally of federally-imposed plans for endangered species preservation. Although there was reportedly some debate, as might be expected, among agency staff about the best approach to take, Stelle and his senior staff ultimately favored a community-based effort led and coordinated by knowledgeable and sophisticated community leaders.

During Stelle's tenure, the agency also developed some top-down initiatives, which many believe contributed to increased interest in collaboration. Stelle's strategy was apparently intended to demonstrate NOAA interest in supporting voluntary recovery efforts but also to demonstrate that NOAA was willing enforce the law if these efforts were not forthcoming. This strategy is perhaps reflected in NOAA's approach to ESA issues in places such as the Methow River and Lower Snake River, where local enforcement actions might have encouraged

⁵² Ruckelshaus was the founding Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the 1970s and is a well-known leader on using a balanced approach on environmental issues as well as a leader in business—in addition to being famous for his resistance to the Nixon administration's order to fire the Watergate special prosecutor, resulting in his resignation. He was a state legislator, state house majority leader, and deputy attorney general in Indiana earlier in his career, and later a corporate vice president and CEO of major U.S. companies. He worked as an attorney in high-profile law firms, and he returned to EPA during the Reagan administration, charged with restoring its reputation after some tarnishing by recent appointees of the administration. He has also played a leadership role in the Pacific Northwest, since coming back to this region, in negotiations between the U.S. and Canada on fishing rights. With his background, reputation, experience, and well-honed abilities in complex circumstances, Ruckelshaus had significant access to government and the business community, both regionally and nationally, and was widely respected among environmental groups and tribes. (He was less familiar to the farm community.) The sum of these factors represented an extraordinary asset to salmon recovery. Despite the several strong and respected leaders in the region who were helpful in this effort, perhaps no one else in the region had these combination of traits.

cooperation with later voluntary efforts in those areas as well as in the Puget Sound where the Shared Strategy operated. These enforcement actions were very controversial at the time—they were generally supported by environmental groups and opposed by other interests such as landowners.

In considering options in the late 1990s, the NOAA regional staff held numerous internal discussions about their ability to implement and enforce a recovery plan, in light of state and local land use and environmental authorities, tribal sovereignty, fisheries regulations, resource constraints, and other factors. According to interviews with many of those who participated, discussion typically focused on what authority and tools they could use or how they could create incentives for compliance. Senior NOAA officials who were involved at the time recall that the agency had a common-sense understanding that a substantially bottom-up plan developed by local watershed groups would have a better chance of being implemented than a top-down, federally-written plan. They apparently concluded that NOAA could more usefully employ its tools and resources to support and encourage such an effort, particularly given the history of imposed recovery plans and the interest among Puget Sound leaders to develop a serious local response.⁵³

Stelle's successor as regional director, Robert Lohn, maintained NOAA's stance of being willing to enforce but also being supportive of a well-organized, broadly representative collaborative solution. Some observers reported that Lohn benefited from the earlier enforcement actions undertaken under Stelle's administration in demonstrating NOAA's resolve. Lohn became a central and essential force in supporting and working with the regional effort that became the Shared Strategy.

DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL RECOVERY TEAMS

NOAA Fisheries initiated a coast-wide process to develop recovery plans for the 27 Pacific salmon ESUs that were listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA.⁵⁴ Key to the process of developing recovery plans was the creation of the geographically-based Technical Recovery Teams (TRTs) along the Pacific Coast (including Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California). The TRTs are multi-disciplinary science teams that provide scientific support to recovery planners through the development of biologically based viability criteria, analysis of recovery strategies,

⁵³ This account of policy discussions and decision making at the NOAA regional office is based on interviews with seven of the senior NOAA officials from this period, most of the Shared Strategy leadership who interacted with them during this period, and other close observers.

⁵⁴ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Northwest Fisheries Science Center. Salmon Recovery Team, TRT domains: <http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/trt/domains.cfm>.

and scientific review of plans.⁵⁵ There were three TRTs, including the Puget Sound TRT, functioning throughout the time Shared Strategy was active. The Puget Sound and Upper Willamette/ Lower Columbia TRTs were formed in spring of 2000 based on nominations received in response to letters of solicitation.⁵⁶ The Interior Columbia TRT formed in 2001.

Summary of Antecedent Efforts

These earlier efforts preceding and surrounding the ESA listing of Puget Sound Chinook were important relationship-building and learning experiences, and in many ways they set the stage for the work and structures that eventually came into being as a result of the Shared Strategy. The relationships formed between the tribes and the state under co-management, and among a number of local jurisdictions, tribes, and NOAA under the Tri-County process, helped convince those involved in salmon recovery throughout the region that a larger collective effort was possible. The Tri-County efforts also highlighted the limitations of any action that was not part of a broader ESU-level strategy. The Watershed Planning Act (ESHB 2514), Salmon Recovery Planning Act (ESHB 2496) and The Salmon Recovery Funding Act (2ESSSB 5595) created state and local relationships, organizational structures, and funding sources that could later be integrated into the broader and more coordinated effort under the Shared Strategy.

In summary, several main points emerge from this brief examination of Puget Sound salmon recovery history:

- First, and most obviously, it is important to know the history of the issues and the institutions involved in order to develop an improved approach.
- Second, it takes time for expertise, processes, and relationships to mature, as demonstrated by the relationship of tribes and state agencies through co-management (and by the amount of time required to crystallize the Shared Strategy relationships and structure as the approach to Puget Sound salmon recovery).
- Third, lessons are learned; earlier efforts can be emulated, like the coordinated work of the Tri-County process, and problems can be recognized and corrected, like the earlier efforts at centralizing Puget Sound planning that spawned so much opposition.
- Fourth, the use of existing entities, rather than creating entirely new ones, allows people to work with familiar procedures and relationships and makes use of existing resources and recognized authorities.

⁵⁵ TRTs also worked throughout Washington on setting recovery ranges for Chinook and other listed endangered species.

⁵⁶ Northwest Fisheries Science Center Intranet. Nominating Individuals for Active TRTs. Accessed online: <http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/trt/nominate.cfm>

- Fifth, respecting existing entities and authority while finding better ways of coordinating, assisting, and providing resources can help those entities upgrade their capacities and motivation to achieve greater results, and preclude or reduce their opposition.
- Sixth, such respect for previous efforts and existing expertise mitigates opposition or eliminates many arguments or rivalries that might otherwise arise.

These lessons were imported into what followed in the development of the Shared Strategy, which is described in the next section.

Formation of the Shared Strategy

Once the leadership and staff of the Tri-County effort recognized that their efforts would not be sufficient, Ron Sims and others approached prominent community leaders such as William Ruckelshaus, Dan Evans, Billy Frank, Jr., and Terry Williams for help in initiating a Puget Sound–wide collaborative process for salmon recovery planning. In contrast to the Tri-County effort, this process would not focus on drafting a Section 4(d) rule but would instead concentrate on developing a strategy for coordinating salmon recovery planning and actions across the region. The end of the Tri-County work, apparent limitations of centralized federal or state approaches, and other factors convinced regional leaders, including NOAA Fisheries, to attempt a locally-led strategy. To avoid yielding to the default option—federal imposition of a salmon recovery plan—they would need a potentially effective alternative, but there was no obvious model available. Something new and tailored to the region would be needed.

Port Ludlow I Meeting

Ruckelshaus and Evans agreed to co-chair a regional meeting at Port Ludlow, a well known conference facility and resort located on Puget Sound, in October 1999 to introduce the idea of a locally-led strategy to other regional leaders and to issue a call to action for different interests to work together toward this common goal. Jim Kramer, an independent consultant, Walter Reid of the Packard Foundation, and Dr. Mary Ruckelshaus of NOAA’s Northwest Fisheries Science Center were closely involved in the planning and organization of the meeting. Dr. Ruckelshaus (as she will be referred to in this report) chaired the Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team (TRT), the science team appointed by NOAA, since it was formed in 2000 until the present (2008). (The TRT is described in detail later in this report.)

The Port Ludlow meeting was officially titled the Puget Sound Salmon Leaders’ Forum but later became known as the Port Ludlow I meeting because it was the first of two region-wide salmon recovery meetings held at that facility.⁵⁷ Attendees included approximately 140 people from

⁵⁷ This description of the Port Ludlow meetings and the development of the Shared Strategy is based on extensive conversations and interviews with dozens of people who were involved; close observers from

local, state, federal, and tribal governments; business and environmental groups; the agriculture and fishing industries; and academia. Prominent leaders, including Governor Locke and NOAA's Will Stelle, lent weight and credibility to the proceedings. John Ehrmann of the Meridian Institute in Colorado facilitated the meeting, which included short presentations, panel discussions, and breakout groups. The meeting organizers drafted a proposal for managing Puget Sound salmon recovery as a starting point for discussion.⁵⁸ It described their motivation for supporting a regional approach:

Our purpose in preparing this call to action is to identify and promote more effective means of empowering local recovery efforts, streamlining recovery funding, and coordinating the establishment of recovery goals and the development of recovery plans. So many levels of government are involved and so many different issues are being addressed that uncoordinated action will lead to redundancy and gaps at best and gridlock, loss of regional control, and substantial economic costs at worst.

The document also described how local participation and support would be critical to preserving and restoring salmon habitat:

Because threatened fish are not restricted to individual watersheds or counties, actions taken by one jurisdiction cannot ensure recovery without coordinated actions by others. It is fundamental to undertake a "bottom up" approach to recovery to ensure that action and commitment are grounded in the affected watersheds. . . . Indeed, the primary purpose of regional coordination is not to centralize decision-making, but to ensure the overall effectiveness of decentralized action.

One of the major outcomes of the Port Ludlow I Meeting was a commitment from key attendees such as NOAA and NWIFC to take concrete steps toward designing and implementing a shared regional salmon recovery strategy. Such commitments, along with the attendance of a broad range of leaders from across the Sound, helped show that the effort was serious and had potential for success. This focus on substantive commitments, as well as the conspicuous presence of major regional leaders, was a source of credibility throughout the Shared Strategy effort.

Attendees stressed that the strategy should build on and support existing efforts and organizations rather than creating a new layer of formal bureaucracy. It was generally agreed

state, local, federal, and tribal governments; and business, environmental, agricultural, and other community leaders. The authors of this report also had the opportunity to examine records and staff work related to the Port Ludlow meetings.

⁵⁸ "A Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound." October 17, 2000. The 2000 document is revised based on earlier documents. The final document was revised on September 25, 2002.

that the goal of salmon recovery should be to meet the biological delisting criteria developed by NOAA, as well as recovering the species to harvestable and sustainable levels. Attendees agreed that science, not politics, should dictate the direction of the recovery strategy at the watershed, ESU, and state levels and that technical information and resources should be shared more widely across the region. Other major conclusions included the need for funding, increased public awareness and participation, and a regional forum to allow salmon leaders to work together.

Ruckelshaus and Evans agreed to host another regional meeting to ensure progress on commitments made at the first meeting and to identify additional actions at the regional level. In the interim, they agreed to convene a working group to develop recommendations for a regional salmon recovery coordination process that would be presented at the next regional meeting.

Proposal for a Shared Strategy

The working group included representatives of local, state, federal, and tribal governments and the business community. The group designated an ad hoc steering committee to lead the effort, which consisted of the following people:

- William Ruckelshaus, private citizen
- Donna Darm, Acting NOAA Regional Administrator
- Billy Frank, Jr., NWIFC Chairman
- Curt Smitch, Special Assistant to the Governor for Natural Resources
- Jeff Koenings, WDFW Director
- Gerry Jackson, USFWS, Western Washington Manager
- Ron Sims, King County Executive
- Chris Endresen, Kitsap County Commissioner

The group met regularly for more than a year (late 1999 to early 2001) to develop a draft document articulating a common vision and proposed elements of a collaborative effort. It was titled “A Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound.” This effort was primarily staffed by Jim Kramer, who later became the executive director of the Shared Strategy. The draft document outlined the goals and objectives of the regional coordination process, affirmed the ability of local communities to develop plans according to their needs and local context, and described the major steps in the process toward a full recovery plan.

The working group explored ways to facilitate and support efforts at both the watershed and ESU levels, and it proposed that a nonprofit organization would be the most effective and acceptable structure for working with the diverse interests involved in salmon recovery planning. The working group believed in having a more neutrally perceived entity to provide leadership and coordination from outside of government, to help circumvent the historic lack of trust among local, state, federal, and tribal governments. The nonprofit organization would use

the existing infrastructure in terms of laws and agency procedures so as to not create an entirely new process. But no existing entity would be the coordinator or lead entity.

In a key provision, the document stated that no entity would be required to give up any of its existing management or regulatory rights and responsibilities in order to participate in the Shared Strategy. It also committed to a collaborative process whereby all levels of government shared similar responsibility and authority for developing a recovery plan. These features were included to address some of the larger concerns discussed at the first Port Ludlow meeting—namely, fear of centralized control of the recovery planning process and loss of local input or existing rights or authority. The more collaborative process was intended to bring all entities together to cooperate on a plan and lend their authority and commitment.

The draft plan was distributed to several hundred interested parties for comment prior to the Port Ludlow II meeting. These reviewers pointed out the need to define work products for the Shared Strategy, clarify tasks and responsibilities, and make the timeline more realistic. The comments focused primarily on uncertainty about the content of the recovery plan, use of interim goals as recovery targets, coordination across watersheds, ensuring accountability in a voluntary effort, and the cost-effectiveness of recovery actions.

The draft plan was revised, and a new version identified incentives and disincentives for participation, defined work products at each step, clarified multiple tasks within certain steps, and identified a timeline for implementation that accounted for current efforts.

Port Ludlow II Meeting

The Port Ludlow II meeting was held in January 2001 and opened with a ceremonial signing of the revised draft Shared Strategy proposal by the working group's steering committee.⁵⁹ The overall meeting goals as stated in the agenda included:

- Create a common understanding of how to build on existing and emerging efforts to recover endangered species (Chinook salmon, Hood Canal Summer Chum, and Bull Trout) across Puget Sound.

⁵⁹ The founding document was revised four times; the last time was in September 2002. The earlier iterations of this document can be found on the Shared Strategy website (<http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/about.htm>). The founding document also provided formal authorization for Ruckelshaus to create the nonprofit organization and undertake the necessary work to implement the other agreements in this founding document. It was signed by Bill Ruckelshaus (private citizen), Jeff Koenings (WDFW), Donna Darm (NOAA), Curt Smitch (GSRO), and Billy Frank, Jr. (NWIFC and Nisqually Tribe), Gerry Jackson (USFWS), Ron Sims (King County Executive), and Chris Endresen (Kitsap County Commissioner). The signed letter and the version of the document produced as a result of the Port Ludlow II meeting are in Appendices C and D of this report.

- Improve and embrace the draft Shared Strategy developed after the first meeting and move it forward.
- Launch efforts to establish the organization necessary to support implementation of the Shared Strategy.

The attendee list and meeting format were almost identical to Port Ludlow I. Bill Ross of Ross and Associates, based in Seattle, facilitated the meeting.

The major outcomes of Port Ludlow II were general agreement on the draft Shared Strategy and commitment to moving forward with a number of critical next steps, such as formally establishing a nonprofit organization to coordinate regional action. It was agreed that the draft Shared Strategy plan would be a living document that could be revised as circumstances changed. Governor Locke, Billy Frank, Jr., and Donna Darm pledged various forms of assistance and reaffirmed their commitment to participating in a collaborative regional process. (Appendix C includes the “Letter to Salmon Supporters, and summary of the Shared Strategy organization and process. Appendix D contains the full text of the Shared Strategy proposal document as it was revised at the Port Ludlow II meeting.

Support for the Shared Strategy Vision

The traditional approach to ESA recovery planning places all decision-making responsibility and authority on the agency with jurisdiction over the listed species (in this case, NOAA). Under ESA section 4(f) the listing agency is responsible for developing and implementing a recovery plan for the listed species. However, the listing agency’s authority is primarily given through section 7 consultations and section 9 take prohibition. The state and local government typically have land use and water management authority, which impact the habitat the listed species depend on. NOAA, Puget Sound leadership and state leadership concluded that it was in the listing agency and local jurisdictions best interest to work with all those who have an ability to impact the listed species.

This is reflected in the state strategy and evidence for why the stakeholders in Puget Sound region departed from traditional approach and agreed to participate in the collaborative process. Stakeholders in the Puget Sound region deliberately departed from this approach by agreeing to participate in the Shared Strategy’s collaborative process. Some of the critical factors that drove the transition to a new process included uncertainty and dissatisfaction over the traditional ESA approach and a pragmatic consideration of benefits and costs of collaboration.

The listing of the Puget Sound Chinook, in particular, was a catalyzing event that caused people to evaluate what they stood to lose or gain under a traditional ESA approach. The consensus among all sectors was that the regulatory uncertainty and loss of local decision-making power under a traditional ESA approach were unacceptable. Farmers, business owners, state natural

resource agencies, and environmentalists are among the historically adversarial groups that preferred the Shared Strategy's collaborative process over other mechanisms of problem-solving. The benefits associated with direct representation outweighed the costs in terms of time and energy spent in meetings, planning, and so forth.

A collaborative process also provided stakeholders with an informal, flexible way to resolve conflict before it escalated into gridlock or hardened positions. The formal ESA hearing process offers no structured mechanism for conflict resolution other than administrative appeals and litigation. The risks associated with litigation—for both parties to a lawsuit—are significant, both in terms of monetary costs and uncertainty over the final outcome. The Shared Strategy was an attractive alternative because it would reduce and spread out risks and costs among all participants. Further, it held out hope to most concerned parties for a commonly acceptable and stable outcome.

NOAA was open to the idea of collaboration for the reasons discussed earlier. The agency was almost certain to be sued if a recovery plan was proposed without substantial and meaningful involvement of affected entities and communities of interest. NOAA leaders also trusted William Ruckelshaus' leadership and his commitment to the scientific credibility of any plan developed under the Shared Strategy. Certainly, the other leaders who had gathered with him to support this collaborative approach offered an impressive array of commitments. However, finding a structure and set of policy-making mechanisms that would attract sufficient support was by no means assured. (Worth noting is that fact that NOAA was not sued during the tenure of the Shared Strategy.)

Despite initially widespread doubts about whether a workable approach could be developed, the proposal for a Shared Strategy was well received, if somewhat warily, by most stakeholder groups—in large part because it had no formal authority to dictate action or create a recovery plan on its own. This was a necessity for some and a significant leap for others. The Shared Strategy also involved a new and promising—and agreed-upon—approach. Ruckelshaus said to skeptics, "If you think you can solve it on your own, go ahead," which highlighted the fact that no one was being compelled to work within the process, but that without it, the chances of successfully recovering salmon were greatly diminished.

While some stakeholders were immediately enthusiastic, most tribal, state, local and community, and interest group leaders interviewed for this report said they were cautiously optimistic or skeptical at the outset, but recognized that there were few alternatives to embrace. Interviewed in 2006, 2007, and 2008 most of these leaders praised the effort and said the Shared Strategy had accomplished a great deal that could not otherwise have been accomplished, although candidly noting the remaining challenges.

Voluntary participation was an essential characteristic of the Shared Strategy's legitimacy. The Shared Strategy was not formally accountable to any entity other than those participating in the

process. However, all participants were accountable to one another in developing a plan that NOAA would accept. Not every jurisdiction and group became thoroughly engaged—some opposed the effort and others later publicly criticized the plan, but most came to trust the process and have significant regard for its structure and results. Even significant critics acknowledged the progress made toward addressing salmon recovery. This confidence and related support grew over the period, although some remained critical. However, most critics acknowledged substantial accomplishments and the value of establishing the new, integrated planning and problem solving capacity.

As later sections of this report show, the Shared Strategy’s constant outreach, attention to maintaining the support of key leaders, and other strategies helped this nonprofit organization become a credible leader and coordinator of a complex planning effort. Among the most significant lessons learned is the importance and potential of a non-authoritative entity as the coordinating and leadership force that can constructively influence events in a previously polarized situation.

Shared Strategy Organization and Timeline

The Shared Strategy proposal presented a regional salmon recovery process that would engage locals in planning on the watershed level and seek individual watershed plans based on common principles that, in the aggregate, would serve as the regional salmon recovery plan.⁶⁰ The stated goals of the strategy were:

- Develop a collaborative recovery plan in two and a half years that is guided by clear goals and meets our broad interests for salmon in Puget Sound.
- Establish an organizational structure to link recovery efforts, complete a recovery plan, and guide its implementation.
- Identify and support important ongoing near-term efforts to protect Puget Sound salmon.

ORGANIZATION

The Shared Strategy process took advantage of existing infrastructure for a watershed-based, bottom-up approach through the ESHB 2496 and ESHB 2514 state legislation described earlier. The Shared Strategy organized its efforts primarily through the watershed planning groups with lead entity mechanisms formed under ESHB 2496 and gave them responsibility for creating individual watershed plans. The 14 watershed planning groups represented geographic areas of

⁶⁰ The description of the development and structure of the Shared Strategy is based on materials on the Shared Strategy website, archival material at the Shared Strategy office, and extensive interviews with working group and committee members and staff; agency, tribal, and other governmental staff; and other informed observers.

various sizes in the Puget Sound region, and thus 14 separate plans would be tied together to create one unified regional recovery plan.⁶¹

In many localities, ESHB 2514 planning groups were already working in the area of habitat management, and many people were concerned about overlap. The Washington State Department of Ecology, a member of the Shared Strategy's top policy and agenda-setting body (at the time called the Development Committee), worked with that body to create a better bridge between ESHB 2496 and ESHB 2514 planning groups. For example, in many areas the ESHB 2514 watershed planning groups helped with habitat characterization for the local salmon recovery plans.

In some local watersheds, the ESHB 2496 planning groups—which had the lead entity feature attached—had essentially the same membership as the ESHB 2514 watershed planning groups. For example, in the Nooksack watershed, the two groups met at different times but their membership was identical. In places where both local groups operated, many of the same people served on multiple committees of the two groups. In other areas, tribes participated only in the ESHB 2496 planning groups.

The lead entity approach was different from the approach taken by other salmon recovery regions in Washington, where the ESHB 2514 watershed planning groups were used as the main planning entities. The advantage of the Shared Strategy approach was that its structure directly tied into the SRF Board funding mechanism and created a strong incentive for groups to participate in order to increase their chances of securing funding for local projects. It also had an advantage in areas where the tribes did not want to participate in an ESHB 2514 watershed planning group. A disadvantage was that it created another layer of coordination and potential turf issues in certain watersheds where the ESHB 2514 watershed planning groups had their own habitat management plans.

TIMELINE

A timeline for the recovery planning process was developed in the Shared Strategy proposal and was revised in subsequent versions of the document. The major steps and milestones were as follows.

Step 1: Identify the contents of a recovery plan, inventory existing efforts, and determine gaps.

- Annotated table of contents for a recovery plan – July 2001

⁶¹ The 14 watersheds in the Puget Sound were: East Kitsap (Water Resource Inventory Area 15), Elwha/Dungeness (WRIA 18), Green/Duwamish (WRIA 9), Hood Canal (WRIA 16), Whidbey and Camano Islands–Island County (WRIA 6, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish (WRIA 8); Nisqually (WRIA 11), Nooksack (WRIA 1), Puyallup/White and Clover/Chambers (WRIA 10 and 12), San Juan Islands (WRIA 2), Skagit (WRIA 3/4), Snohomish (WRIA 7), South Sound (WRIA 13 and 14), and Stillaguamish (WRIA 5).

- Matrix of existing efforts – October 2002
- Analysis of gaps in recovery planning – December 2002

Step 2: Identify interim recovery goals for each watershed.

- Document interim goals for watersheds – March 2002
- Joint report from the state, tribes, and Technical Recovery Team – March 2002

Step 3: Begin to identify the actions necessary to achieve recovery goals.

- Meetings with existing watershed groups – January through November 2002
- Watershed guidelines for recovery plan – December 2002
- Complete watershed review of goals and actions – December 2003

Step 4: Identify and evaluate regional recovery options.

- Draft plan outlining all options to achieve recovery – June 2004

Step 5: Commit to watershed and regional recovery goals and the actions necessary to achieve them, and monitor results.

- Finalize interim recovery goals for all watersheds – June 2005
- Develop monitoring and evaluation program – June 2005
- An agreed-upon Recovery Plan – June 2005

Components of the Shared Strategy

Because there was no existing infrastructure for joint planning among the many jurisdictions and organizations involved in the Shared Strategy, and because of the commitment to develop local plans based on local circumstances, its coordinating structure would have to rely on existing entities for most of the actual planning work. The challenge would be to motivate coordinated activity on a scale and of a type that hadn't been seen, certainly in this region, or with other known ESA responses.

The challenges included relying on individual watersheds to develop local plans that were scientifically credible, would gain local commitment for later implementation, and were consistent across watersheds. This need for balance between local autonomy and having an overall plan that could have regional impact led to a combination of so-called "top-down, bottom-up" structures and mechanisms. The bottom-up dimension was characterized by having local watershed groups, some formed under previous laws and programs, be responsible for developing local plans. The top-down dimension included having a Technical Recovery Team (TRT) provide initial scientific input to set recovery ranges for Chinook in each of the 14 Puget Sound watersheds.⁶² The Puget Sound TRT also reviewed and provided nonbinding but

⁶² Other TRTs also worked throughout Washington on setting recovery ranges for Chinook and other listed endangered species.

authoritative input on the draft plans of each watershed. The insistence on standards, schedules, and certain processes—and some centralization of activities and leadership—was also part of the top-down aspect.

The Shared Strategy included five major component groups that contributed to developing the regional recovery plan, as shown in the “Who’s Who” listing of these groups and the persons on them, circa 2006, in Appendix E. As with most collaborative processes, only hard work and consultation—in this case facilitated and led by the Shared Strategy staff—between meetings made the formal structure and interactions effective.

The first entity was the nonprofit corporation, the **Puget Sound Salmon Forum**, whose board of directors’ functions we will describe shortly. This legal entity—known widely, and referred to in this report, as “the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound” or simply “the Shared Strategy”—could receive and expend funds, hire staff, and serve as the legal focal point. This corporate board was not involved in directing or deciding policy. The staff of the Shared Strategy reported formally through the executive director to the board and provided the linkage among all of these component groups.

Second, an informal consultative group called the **Policy Work Group** began meeting early in the process, during the fall of 1999. It included staff representatives from the major regulatory/governmental policy groups from federal, state, local, and tribal governments. The work group provided a venue for informal discussion and review of policies that were being developed at various levels of the effort. The members of the Policy Work Group reported to their respective agency heads who were on the Development Committee/Recovery Council (described below) and could serve as a bridge in developing and vetting policy and avoiding surprises. The Policy Work Group, which was convened as an advisory group by the Shared Strategy Executive Director, had no formal decision-making role, but because of the potential influence of its agency heads, and available expertise at these major entities, the group was a valuable and influential player. Importantly, this group contained representation from all of the major regulatory entities affecting salmon recovery. It did not have policy authority, but served as an advisory group and sounding board, bringing in existing knowledge, history, and access to expertise from their respective organizations. The group members also took new ideas and information about local capacity and efforts back to their respective agencies. This two-way communication and integration of missions had beneficial effects on what otherwise could have been two camps: one preserving old ways and assumptions, and another ignoring the knowledge and authority already in existence.

Third, the **Development Committee**, later known as the **Recovery Council**, was established as the primary policy making/coordinating body. All major regional/ESU-scale policy decisions flowed through this committee. This group included recognized leaders from interested and affected organizations and communities, such as environmental leaders, business leaders,

county council members and executives, mayors, state and federal agency department heads, and tribal government leaders.

Fourth, and at the heart of the effort, were the **watershed planning groups**, where local recovery plans were developed. Members were locally appointed, and all groups existed and functioned prior to the establishment of the Shared Strategy. Later, the leaders of the watershed planning groups across the 14 watersheds were brought together into a separate, and later, formally constituted, working group called the **Watershed Implementation Leads Group**.

The fifth and final entity was the **Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team**, which was established (along with other geographically-based TRTs) by NOAA in 2000, prior to the formation of the Shared Strategy. It came to play a central role in the Shared Strategy effort, breaking the typical mold of science teams simply having a separate stand setting and review function. While the Puget Sound TRT (hereafter referred to as “the TRT”) operated in a realm separate from the main policy-making components, it became a highly integrated partner, particularly in some watersheds, and has been widely recognized for its contribution to the quality and value of the watershed plans.

These five entities are examined in greater detail in the upcoming sections. The report will also closely examine the crucial role of the Shared Strategy staff and leadership which played a crucial role in the effectiveness of these component entities and their achievements.

Shared Strategy Board of Directors

Because no existing entity had the necessary geographic or policy scope, expertise, or credibility to take on the development of the regional recovery plan, the nonprofit Puget Sound Salmon Forum was created in 2001 to facilitate the participation of all affected stakeholders and provide focus and leadership. The effort to create this nonprofit entity was led by highly credible individuals with no personal or bureaucratic stake in it, and the daily work of the nonprofit would be governed by a broad set of policy and advisory groups. These factors were critical to the agreement to entrust the Shared Strategy effort to a nonprofit entity without formal authority.

The Puget Sound Salmon Forum could accept funds allocated specifically for organizing and overseeing the planning effort. It had the authority to hire staff and expend funds, while being held accountable for these activities. Its board of directors had the sole mission of ensuring that salmon recovery planning proceeded in accordance with the agreements at Port Ludlow. The Board did not have policy authority. Policy authority was placed in the region-wide Development Committee.

Although the Shared Strategy staff (four to seven FTEs at varying times) and annual operating budget (approximately \$870,000 per year)⁶³ were small, the nonprofit's ability to operate quickly without regard to any other organization's procedures and priorities proved crucial. Jim Kramer, the executive director, and the staff focused on keeping the operation lean so the maximum amount of resources could be devoted to the habitat projects and on-the-ground planning. This was seen as both substantively and symbolically important, although it imposed a large burden on the staff.

The board of directors consisted of prominent people in business, tribal government, state government, and the community at large. Their reputation and the balance of their backgrounds would be crucial to the board's ability to seek funding from the public and private sectors. Their backgrounds and intensive involvement and responsiveness also contributed to building support for the process among constituencies that would not normally collaborate in this sort of effort, particularly segments of the community that had not traditionally been active in natural resource recovery concerns.

Between January and June of 2001, a considerable amount of time was spent recruiting board members, refining the vision, and completing the legal work of establishing the nonprofit organization. In June 2001, the board was formally designated, and in May 2002 the Puget Sound Salmon Forum officially became a nonprofit organization and began to hire staff.

Dan Evans was the first president of the board; he soon transitioned out of this role and became a general member of the board. Ralph Munro, a former Washington secretary of state, took over as president and served in that capacity until the nonprofit entity disbanded in 2007.

The Shared Strategy board of directors included these members from 2001 to 2007:

- Dan Evans, first president of the board (former Washington state governor and former U.S. senator)
- Ralph Munro, president of the board for most of the planning period (former Washington secretary of state)
- Billy Frank, Jr., vice-president (chair, NWIFC)
- Colin Moseley, treasurer (Simpson Investment)
- Marie Mentor, secretary (Laird Norton Trust Company and Pacific Rivers Council)
- Lorraine Loomis (fisheries manager, Swinomish Tribe)

⁶³ From 2003 to 2005, the Shared Strategy funds totaled \$1,741,576; the total from 2002 to 2007 was \$4,877,936. (These numbers are presented this way because of the difficulty of accurately disaggregating the funding, particularly several years afterwards without access to people and documents from that period of time,

As mentioned earlier, the board assumed two roles critical to the high-level operation of the Shared Strategy⁶⁴:

- **Finance.** One of the board's main functions was to oversee the financial health of the Shared Strategy. It solicited both private and public funding. A portion of the funding was used for meetings and other events that were important to building Sound-wide unity but not easy to fund through government sources. Later, the focus shifted to larger amounts of public funding for the recovery effort. By the end, the main funding source was the federal government, with much of the funding coming through the SRF Board, as described later.
- **Accountability.** The board was the legally accountable administrative entity of the Shared Strategy and was responsible for overseeing finances, goal setting, and the performance of the executive director, Jim Kramer. As is typical, the board was responsible for approving the annual budget of the Shared Strategy. The presence of diverse interests on the board seems to have inspired confidence that the funds would be used to support the goals and process agreed to at Port Ludlow. The composition of the board also seems to have helped with fundraising, particularly in the early stages before there was a track record for staff and management and before region-wide relationships and trust had developed.

Policy Work Group

The Policy Work Group began as a group of agency staff brought together by William Ruckelshaus after the Port Ludlow I meeting in the fall of 1999. The group provided staff support to the leaders drafting the original proposal for a Shared Strategy, which included Ruckelshaus, Donna Darm, Curt Smitch, Billy Frank, Jr., Gerry Jackson, Jeff Koenings, Ron Sims, and Chris Endresen. Together these leaders and the Policy Work Group developed the founding document, "A Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound," which was described earlier.

The Policy Work Group was composed of agency and other public entity staff representing local, state, federal, and tribal interests. It provided a key linkage between on the ground efforts and high-level policy staff at the agencies and tribal governments. It was also a key link between existing authorities and the emerging coordinating and policy development influence of the Shared Strategy. These groups had not previously worked together on a regular basis nor in this manner, so the precedent established for this type of coordinating and linking body will be useful for the future implementation of and review efforts around natural resource

⁶⁴ The Puget Sound Salmon Forum. "Puget Sound Salmon Recovery: A Shared Strategy, Forum Summary." dnr.metrokc.gov/wrias/9/archive/0106/SteerCom/6-fourteenfourteen%20Salmon%20Forum%20Summary.doc. Accessed December 12, 2007.

management. Members of the initial Policy Work Group supporting the proposal for a Shared Strategy included:

- Elizabeth Babcock, NOAA
- Jeff Chan, USFWS
- Steve Leider, GSRO
- Lloyd Moody, GSRO
- Steve Nicholas, King County
- Mary Ruckelshaus, NOAA
- Teresa Scott, WDFW
- Charles Stringer, NWIFC
- Jay Watson, Hood Canal Coordinating Council

The Port Ludlow II meeting marked a turning point in the planning efforts and the purpose of the Policy Work Group. Within a year after this meeting, the nonprofit organization of the Shared Strategy was established and the collaborative process became more formalized and coordinated at the regional level. Although its original purpose had been met, the Policy Work Group remained a separate policy advisory and support staff group for various component groups within the Shared Strategy. Its membership changed slightly after Port Ludlow II:

- Elizabeth Babcock, NOAA
- Scott Brewer, Hood Canal Coordinating Council
- Jeff Chan, USFWS
- Mike Grayum, NWIFC
- Sara La Borde, WDFW
- Lloyd Moody, GSRO
- Teresa Scott, WDFW
- David St. John, King County
- Bob Whitener, NWIFC

Relationship of the Policy Work Group to Other Shared Strategy Groups

The Policy Work Group acted as a sounding board and helped devise strategies and solutions for policy problems facing the Recovery Council, the Shared Strategy staff, and the TRT. Early in the process, the Policy Work Group helped Shared Strategy staff develop a strategy for approaching and coordinating with watersheds. They knew the underlying political characteristics and variability among watersheds and could, therefore, provide insight into issues of local capacity and concerns about control and independence. Executive Director Jim Kramer met regularly with the Policy Work Group, later assisted by the associate director and at times one of the Shared Strategy watershed liaisons.

The group was known by various names based on its different types of work over the period of Shared Strategy operation with different groups. For example, the Policy Work Group worked

closely with the Recovery Council (the primary forum for setting the policy agenda and direction for the Shared Strategy) to provide staff support and analysis of policy issues. In this capacity, it was known as the Recovery Council Work Group.

The Policy Work Group also worked closely with Shared Strategy staff and the TRT to conduct early reviews of watershed plans and provide feedback on watershed implementation work plans. In this capacity, it was referred to as the Interdisciplinary Policy Review Committee. It worked with Shared Strategy staff and the TRT to develop approaches to providing policy and technical feedback in a way that would be constructive and helpful to the watersheds, especially those with fewer resources and less capacity.

The Policy Work Group provided important insights into local and agency policies and related history and politics and was an important link to other policy processes outside of salmon recovery planning that could affect the work of the Shared Strategy. The following sections detail its major functions within the Shared Strategy process.

Keeping High Level Decision Makers Involved

Because the Policy Work Group staff represented key agencies and authorities, they had the important role of keeping the principal decision makers at their agencies informed about and engaged in the Shared Strategy policy-setting process. Most agency and governmental heads to whom the work group members reported were on the policy-making Development Committee/Recovery Council. This helped ensure that critical issues or roadblocks would be addressed proactively and that the Shared Strategy proposals or policies recognized the local, state, federal, and tribal contexts. It was also important for heading off potential conflicts and surprises. Members of the Policy Work Group could discuss potential Shared Strategy policies with their principals and work through concerns in a more private setting—rather than discussing them directly in another policy forum such as the Recovery Council. The Policy Work Group also contributed political insight at the local, state, federal, and tribal levels and served to broaden the Shared Strategy leaders’ understanding of the key people from whom they needed support.

The Policy Work Group structure also offered a quiet forum for exploration of potentially sensitive or contentious issues and candidly discussing pertinent interagency politics or history.⁶⁵ For example, when the idea of designating certain geographic “hotspots” for focused attention was first raised, the Policy Work Group offered a venue for discussing this polarizing issue. Following this initial exploration, the discussion continued internally and eventually involved members of the Development Committee (the precursor to the Recovery Council), Shared Strategy staff, and the TRT.

⁶⁵ These descriptions draw on extensive interviews with Policy Work Group members, involved Shared Strategy staff and other close by observers.

Although the hotspot approach was appealing from a number of angles, including resource allocation, the need for region-wide consensus was seen as critical to gaining the needed cooperation and support for salmon recovery efforts. It was ultimately decided that selecting a hotspot strategy, particularly before planning had begun and trust had developed in the process, would put the emerging regional coalition at risk. This decision appears to have been vindicated from a policy standpoint when, in 2007, the collective of 14 watersheds, as represented in the Recovery Council and watershed leads group, voluntarily approved plans that began to focus on regionally critical issues. The biological results, of course, are many years away from being assessable. But from a policy point of view, it is now widely believed that an early focus on a few areas would not have generated the full region-wide support, cooperation, and coordination now in place, would have weakened effort and political support at the regional and local levels, and would have led to fewer resources and less cooperation. The pie is arguably much bigger as a result of trusted, unified action and support for salmon recovery, and prospects for more strategic attention and resource allocation seem to be emerging as part of the regional consensus. The hotspot approach, while perhaps scientifically supportable, would have been very risky, if not destructive of the coalition that emerged in support of state and federal funding and in support of increasingly focused policies that began to later emerge on a voluntary, rather than imposed basis.

Reviewing Watershed Plans

The Policy Work Group took on a more public role in 2004 during the reviews of draft watershed plans, when it worked as the policy counterpart to the TRT to review each individual plan and provide early feedback. Much of its feedback was directed toward strengthening the commitments outlined in each watershed's 10-year implementation plan. The key questions asked of local decision makers included:⁶⁶

- What are your long-term measurable goals and 10-year objectives? Of the habitat, harvest, and hatchery conditions necessary to support the populations in your watershed, which can you make significant progress on in the 10-year timeframe?
- What conditions are necessary to implement the actions identified in your 10-year timeframe? Are the conditions supported by those responsible for the implementation? If funding during the next 10 years is not available for all areas, where you would like to make significant progress, how will you prioritize actions?
- What actions are necessary to achieve the protection of existing functions? What conditions must be in place to achieve protection? Are these conditions supported by those responsible for implementation?

⁶⁶ "Shared Strategy Feedback for Decision-Makers." Under "2004 Draft Watershed Recovery Plan Policy Feedback Summaries" on the Shared Strategy website:

http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/resources.htm#policy_tech. Accessed 12/13/07.

This review function of the Policy Work Group was useful at the regional level to obtain a measure of standardization in the policy aspects of the recovery plans, while still allowing for differences based on local contexts and working toward the most realistic plans that could be extracted with the time and resources available. The policy reviews pointed out potential policy issues or conflicts in the draft plans and highlighted areas where the plans could or should go further. The reviews appear to have contributed to making many of the plans more coordinated among habitat, harvest, and hatchery actions and helped them to conform to an overall regional policy and strategy.

Reviewing Work Plans

Policy Work Group staff also reviewed the three-year implementation work plans developed in April 2006 by each watershed and provided detailed policy analysis and recommendations to increase the likelihood of effective local implementation. The following questions guided the evaluation of the work plans:⁶⁷

- Is the work program consistent with the policy feedback and recommendations from the 2004 and 2005 documents (“Watershed Policy Feedback Summaries”; Recovery Plan December 2005, Volume I, Watershed Profiles results sections; and NOAA’s federal supplement published in the Federal Register on Dec. 16, 2005)?
- Is the work program tied to the objectives identified at a pace sufficient to achieve the watershed’s 10-year goals?
- Are there significant elements missing, and how might these be addressed?

The reviews of the three-year work plans were helpful to the region and the watersheds because they highlighted policy issues that were not being addressed. For example, across watersheds it was recognized that additional efforts were needed to reach an integrated approach for habitat, harvest, and hatchery actions as well as to develop adaptive management plans. (It is widely acknowledged among and outside of the Shared Strategy participants that harvest and hatchery issues were not addressed sufficiently in the final regional Shared Strategy submitted to NOAA, and that the follow-on effort would have to work to address this.)

Significance of the Policy Work Group

The Policy Work Group, as an informal but regular and essential part of the process, ensured that those with formal authority and responsibility for the issues under discussion would always have a chance for input, that their contributions would be respected and integrated into the work, and that they would not be surprised—even if they might disagree with policies proposed or adopted. One of the tenets of using collaborative processes for solving public policy

⁶⁷ “Comments on April 2006 Three Year Work Plan.” Under “2006 Three Year Work Program Review Feedback” on the Shared Strategy website:

http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/resources.htm#policy_tech, Accessed 12/13/07.

problems is that the informal collaborative process must be sponsored by and work with existing legitimate authority. The Policy Work Group provided the primary informal dimension of that work with sources of authority. (The more formal dimensions included NOAA's support of the planning process and later acceptance of the plan, allocation of resources from state and federal agencies, and other formal actions.) This ongoing interaction provided the Shared Strategy with the implicit collective authority of the primary regulatory and resource-providing entities and ensured that the sponsoring and responsible entities would not be surprised at the outcome or by significant developments along the way.

The Policy Work Group members were mostly senior staff for the principals at their respective agencies, so they brought primarily policy and technical expertise. Their agency leaders were on the Development Committee, where they were among many at the table. Had the Policy Work Group members been agency leaders, the dynamic would have been different and the group would have been a shadow Development Committee of sorts. The informal Policy Work Group mechanism gave involved agencies a front-row seat in a manner that respected their experience and allowed them to learn from one another and others involved in the Shared Strategy process while keeping their influence in balance through the collaborative process—leaving the decision-making authority to the broad, regional Development Committee/Recovery Council.

The state and federal agency leaders whose agencies were represented in the Policy Work Group, as well as others, spoke in 2007 about how much they and their staff learned and the great progress achieved in working across federal, state, and local lines and working government-to-government with the tribes. By 2007, all of those agency leaders perceived the value of the overall Shared Strategy effort and its leadership and understood that none of their agencies had the sufficient combination of tools and credibility to perform the leadership and coordinating role that was played by the independent and newly created Shared Strategy entities.⁶⁸

Development Committee/Recovery Council

The initial proposal for the Shared Strategy's organizational structure that was agreed upon at the Port Ludlow II meeting called for the creation of a region-wide committee to provide overall leadership and facilitate policy decision making for the Shared Strategy process. This group was initially called the Development Committee.

⁶⁸ Participants in the Policy Work Group and the Shared Strategy staff reported on the value and usefulness of the group. The Policy Work Group was criticized by some outside observers as not being a fully collaborative group and for failing to address some politically unpopular issues when they were brought up. However, most who commented on the group say that it discussed many difficult issues with contentious histories in ways that were helpful in resolving and anticipating many problems.

The Development Committee was intended to bring together a representative group of political, community, and agency leaders to work together closely and was designed to be the top forum for hearing, discussing, and deciding key policy issues affecting the planning process and for setting the main policy goals and direction. This group garnered the involvement of a diverse group of entities that were necessary to a successful collaborative effort and demonstrated to the state and federal authorities the value of investing in salmon recovery and later the overall health of the Puget Sound.

The initial proposal for the Shared Strategy outlined the primary duties and responsibilities of the Development Committee:⁶⁹

- Oversee implementation of the planning process for developing the Shared Strategy
- Synthesize science and policy options in light of fostering achievable options at the watershed level
- Identify priorities for funding, regulatory approval, technical support, etc.
- Advocate for necessary policy changes identified through the recovery planning process to promote greater coordination
- Advocate for sufficient, reliable funding
- Reach consensus on elements of the recovery plan
- Recommend and forward a draft plan for review across the region
- Submit the draft plan to NOAA and USFWS

The proposal called for the committee to have diverse membership to adequately represent a regional view, with representatives from federal and state agencies, tribes, local watersheds, business, agriculture and forestry interests, and environmental groups. It was chaired by William Ruckelshaus and used a consensus decision-making process that allowed it to be self-governing. This membership of prominent individuals representing most of the major constituencies became the initial source of authority for the Shared Strategy. These leaders helped to gain the participation of others, opened doors, helped to garner resources, and provided advice and experience. In a sense, they lent their individual and collective authority to the Shared Strategy—a necessary step because the Shared Strategy, by design, had no authority beyond what was granted by those affected. This was the deal struck at Port Ludlow.

In this early period, much of the faith and trust placed in the process rested on the credibility of Ruckelshaus and other leaders such as Billy Frank, Jr.,⁷⁰ Ron Sims, Jeff Koenings (Washington

⁶⁹ Shared Salmon Strategy (2001). "Draft Shared Strategy Organization." Accessed online: <http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/about.htm>

⁷⁰ For background on Billy Frank, Jr., see "Messages from Frank's Landing: A Story of Salmon, Treaties, and the Indian Way" by Charles F. Wilkinson. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000.

Department of Fish and Wildlife director), Tom Fitzsimmons (Department of Ecology) and Jay Manning, who at the time of Shared Strategy's formulation, was president of the Washington Environmental Council (WEC) and later served as the head of the Washington Department of Ecology. (Joe Ryan took over the role of WEC president and Development Committee member when Manning transitioned to DOE.) But it was Ruckelshaus who attracted even these core leaders. As more and more leaders in the community were convinced to join the Development Committee, trust seemed to increase. Later, actual performance strengthened the credibility of the Shared Strategy and turned many initial skeptics into admirers. But it was the attitude of and recruitment of additional key leaders that provided the initial credibility and optimism.

A group such as the Development Committee is a fairly typical structure to bring together when trying to address a contentious issue—a set of prominent leaders who are representative of affected interests. Generally speaking, such committees are most successful when groups and leaders who can most influence an agreement and affect implementation are at the table or are deeply involved. Not only must they be highly representative and credible, but their efforts have to be sponsored and legitimized by those with actual authority—in this case NOAA and, to a lesser extent, USFWS and the state agencies with regulatory authority: DOE, WDFW, and the tribes with co-management authority for fisheries. These entities were all represented on the Development Committee.

However, the Shared Strategy process, partly because of the geographic spread of the affected entities and those who would have to plan and later alter policies, needed more layers to accomplish its goals. These included two less typical structures—a science advisory group, represented in Shared Strategy by the NOAA-appointed Puget Sound TRT, and even more unusual, the significant presence of front-line leaders such as those on what later became the Watershed Leads Implementation Group (described in detail later in the report). Even though the watershed leads group became a large part of the governance structure only later in the process, its members were consulted informally and frequently from early in the process. Without the commitment of these local leaders, the plans could not have been developed. No amount of policy decisions by the Development Committee if it had been acting as the only consultative, problem solving body could have produced sufficiently effective and agreed upon local watershed plans. (Later in this report, we will examine the importance of the constant Shared Strategy staff interaction with the watershed leads.)

The Shared Strategy and the Development Committee/Recovery Council also differed from typical interagency, inter-jurisdictional leadership groups in that they attempted to address (to varying but improving degrees of success) the historical and political relationships among the players to foster collaboration. Both explicit at-the-table discussions and behind-the-scenes conversations about these issues took place. For example, most of these leaders interacted with one another outside of this process on other issues where they did not necessarily need to collaborate but had to represent the interests of their respective organizations. The Shared Strategy had to create a context in which they would be willing to be flexible, speak more openly

about both the limitations and opportunities available to them in support of this effort, and move off their original individual or organizational positions.

Also unusual for interagency groups (except those with successful collaborative processes) was the expectation that members participate actively and not simply listen and report back to their respective agencies or make political statements. Political statements were made, of course, but the facilitator and Shared Strategy staff, with the help of the Policy Work Group, worked to lessen those instances and increase the leaders' willingness to engage in meaningful problem-solving discussions. So not only was there structural change, or establishment of a new structure, but also a process change in terms of decision-making and problem-solving. These live on and continue to have an impact within the new Puget Sound Partnership.

The Development Committee changed its name to the Recovery Council in January 2006 after the acceptance of the regional recovery plan by NOAA, which signified the end of the planning phase of the Shared Strategy. The committee members agreed that the group's composition and name should change to reflect its shift of focus to implementation issues. The Recovery Council's oversight and leadership responsibilities remained the same, but its work focus shifted to three primary areas:⁷¹

- Provide leadership for recovery plan implementation
- Guide the overall work program
- Direct subcommittee work and review products

Reflecting the importance of watersheds in the implementation phase of the recovery plan, the number of watershed representatives on the committee increased from two to all 14. (A similar, locally-weighted arrangement was reflected in the successful structure of the Northwest Straits Commission, a locally driven but regional approach to marine protection in the northern part of Puget Sound that was established by Senator Patty Murray and Representative Jack Metcalf in 1998.)⁷²

Development Committee/Recovery Council Functions

The Development Committee/Recovery Council played a key role in providing the needed authority, leadership, and oversight for the Shared Strategy process. The group's primary functions were to provide a leadership discussion forum for strategic planning and resolution of issues at a regional level, to establish the overall regional policy direction for the Shared Strategy, and once recovery plans were submitted (2006) to develop the region's financial strategy and funding priorities.

⁷¹ Puget Sound Recovery Council; Wednesday, February 15, 2006, 9:30 am-2:30 pm; Edmonds City Hall, Edmonds, WA; Meeting Summary.

⁷² See the report on the Northwest Straits Commission by the WSU-UW Policy Consensus Center

Leadership discussion forum. The Development Committee/Recovery Council was a forum for leaders to meet, discuss pertinent issues. They would then, report back to or gather input from or, as appropriate, attempt to engage or persuade, their own organizations, watersheds, or agencies. The diverse composition of the group provided a formal venue for discussions about topics of importance to all interests at the table. Most participants found it to be a safe place to voice their ideas and concerns and to brainstorm solutions to problems. For the most part, participants felt that the Development Committee/Recovery Council offered an inclusive and open process.

Critics say the group's discussions were not as robust as they could have been and that differing opinions were downplayed or discouraged. Some assert that the collaborative spirit of the meetings resulted in less time spent on difficult issues and concerns. They suggest that the Development Committee/Recovery Council was a formality, not a true forum for addressing important topics. Based on observations of others present, there is some truth to these criticisms, particularly early on, but many of these criticisms could be leveled at any large group that meets infrequently and offers limited air time to participants. In fact, the exchanges appear to have been candid, and sharp questions were often asked, particularly after the initial, more formal or awkward meetings. In particular, these meetings reflected growth in trust and relationships, as well as work done in committees. The pace of the work, limited time, and paucity of staff resources might have contributed to some key policy decisions being pushed forward with less-than-ideal amounts of time for development or vetting. But this seems inevitable given the political and time restrictions. Most participants said the process was, overall, very open.

Many who criticized the Development Committee early on, and particularly the executive director Jim Kramer for being overly controlling, later praised him for his foresight and commitment to pushing policy and operational issues to a decision. Others praised the fact that the leadership, including Kramer, Ruckelshaus, Frank, Lohn, Sims, and farm leaders such as Mike Shelby and Jay Gordon, communicated easily and moved issues through. However, the criticism should be kept in mind because it is easy for large groups that meet infrequently to fall prey to insufficient vetting of some issues. Not all such criticism was ameliorated by performance over time, but it was significantly reduced.

Policy direction. As intended, the Development Committee/Recovery Council played a critical role in setting the overall policy direction of the Shared Strategy and establishing the collaborative approach to salmon recovery. For instance, the Development Committee and the Policy Work Group collaborated with NOAA Fisheries to address issues that were raised during the public comment period for the draft recovery plan. The Development Committee's objective was to ensure that the plan's original direction and objectives were not lost in the process and that issues were resolved through the collaborative process under which the plan

was developed.⁷³ As our interviews with participants have confirmed, the presence of senior leadership from so many jurisdictions and constituencies ensured that no major interests would be neglected, although, as in any consensus process, interests had to be balanced and not every decision could please everyone entirely.

Financial strategy. Once the recovery plans were submitted, the Recovery Council began playing a critical role in identifying sources of funding and policies for allocation of funding. The agendas of many meetings in 2006 highlight the importance of the Recovery Council in strategizing about policy decisions concerning the allocation of funds across watersheds. The following discussion topics highlighted in meeting summaries reflect that financial strategizing became primary function of the Recovery Council, for which it established a committee and hired a consultant:⁷⁴

- Decision on criteria for ESU funding allocation
- Discussion of ESU funding scenarios proposal
- Decision on ESU funding allocation (selected from funding scenarios proposal)

Developing and implementing a strategy for long-term funding for the Shared Strategy became a primary function of the Recovery Council. The estimated cost for implementing the 10-year plans was \$1.4 billion over 10 years. The council developed a financing strategy to meet this need and obtained an initial commitment of \$40.75 million in FY2007 from the state government through the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration funds as part of the broader Puget Sound Partnership. This was reduced in later budget difficulties experienced by the state and national economies during 2008 and 2009 as this report was being completed.

The council also reviewed and discussed the process for allocating SRF Board funds in the Puget Sound region and made recommendations as part of the Council of Regions (which included the five salmon recovery areas in Washington) that affected SRF Board policy. The SRF Board was established in 1999 under the state's Salmon Recovery Funding Act and provided funds for habitat restoration projects. The Recovery Council systematically reviewed, analyzed, and discussed allocation methods and ultimately submitted recommendations to the SRF Board. For instance, in 2006 the SRF Board (per recommendations made by the Recovery Council) departed from allocation based solely on equity among watersheds and chose to allocate funds at historic average levels while allowing only one project to be funded per lead entity, with the remainder

⁷³ Puget Sound Recovery Council; Thursday, March 23, 2006, 9:30 am-2:30 pm; Seattle Central Library, Seattle WA; Meeting Summary.

⁷⁴ Recovery Council meeting summaries from 2006. Evergreen Funding Consultants played a helpful role in identifying funding sources and challenges, and performing financial analysis needed by the Recovery Council.

being allocated based on regional priorities. This change, referred to earlier, was seen as a transition to a longer-term regional investment strategy.

The Development Committee/Recovery Council also played an important role in developing relationships with and providing information to elected officials prior to requesting state and federal funding. In the two years before the 2007 legislative session, it approached the governor and key legislators to inform them about the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan and to ensure that the issue remained a priority in the state's budgeting process.

Development Committee/Recovery Council Challenges

The Development Committee/Recovery Council faced a number of challenges as it worked to carry out its oversight and leadership responsibilities. Two of the major challenges and the group's response are described here.

Leadership without formal authority. The Development Committee/Recovery Council—as well as the Shared Strategy staff—was challenged to provide leadership for the Shared Strategy effort without having any formal authority. Many of the interests represented on the Development Committee/Recovery Council had traditionally been at odds with each other and unwilling to cede or share authority or resources. Because the Shared Strategy itself was a nonprofit organization with no formal authority, it relied on the participation and support of those with access to formal channels of authority through their particular agencies or organizations. The Development Committee/Recovery Council's authority lay solely in its broad representation of organizations and the participation of high-level decision makers. Even in the planning phase, this implied authority was harnessed to good effect—to obtain information, expertise, and funding.

The group's lack of formal authority also meant that it was without a formal mechanism for ensuring accountability of its members. Participation on the Development Committee/Recovery Council was voluntary, and the group used collaborative decision making with the goal of full consensus and transparency. The group was able to create accountability using the pressure and expectations of its peer network to ensure that agreed-upon priorities for the planning and substantially useful outcomes were achieved. The Shared Strategy staff was very active with follow-up and related project management. The use of deadlines for plan drafts was also critical. Much of the accountability came from the ongoing threat of NOAA action if the Shared Strategy did not produce an adequate plan, and otherwise from the sense of mission in those on these regional leadership committees. Later, accountability was in the form of the completed, agreed-to plans, around which, in most watersheds there was considerable enthusiasm, but where many difficult steps had yet to be taken in implementation.

Maintaining commitment of diverse interests. All interests critical to the success of the Shared Strategy effort were formally represented on the Development Committee and later the Recovery Council. On the initial Development Committee, watershed planning groups were

given only two seats in total, which may have inadvertently minimized the importance of local watershed interests in the overall direction of the Shared Strategy. In 2006, a critical decision was made by Shared Strategy leadership and the committee members to revamp the membership structure so all watersheds could be directly involved in the Recovery Council and its regional decision process. At that point, each watershed gained a seat at the table and became a part of the Recovery Council.

Recovery Council Operations and Priorities

Coming into existence as it did following the adoption of the Shared Strategy plan by NOAA, the Recovery Council divided its work into six areas: protection, H-integration (habitat, harvest, hatcheries, and hydroelectric [dams]), water quantity, finances, climate change, and adaptive management and monitoring. This agenda represented an expansion of the agenda set forth in the early mandate of the Shared Strategy, as well as an acknowledgment of criticisms that the earlier work had failed to include or make progress on the H's (other than habitat), water quantity, adaptive management, and climate change.

The Shared Strategy had previously focused on the strategic importance of getting the plan done, in order to maintain political and funding support and provide an interim point at which success could be observed and celebrated. The Shared Strategy leadership had calculated that with the plan accepted and infrastructure in place, more difficult, controversial, or less recognized tasks could be addressed. This judgment appears to have been warranted, but only time will tell for certain. Most informed observers doubt that the federal or state authorities would have remained patient through 2 or 3 more years of planning to include these omitted items. Also, the \$40.75 million state commitment in 2007 through the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Funds and the federal commitments of \$2 million in 2006 and \$15 million in 2007 would likely not have been forthcoming in the absence of a completed, if imperfect regional plan.⁷⁵

H-integration presented many challenges but was seen as a key to the future success of the effort. Part of the challenge related to the distinct lines of authority, science, and politics on each of the H's, as well as the resource implications of each. For example, habitat restoration faced fewer political and institutional barriers than hatchery or harvest issues, which are much more controversial scientifically and politically. Harvest is a closely held process among the co-managers (tribes and WDFW) and is tied up with a long history of court decisions and economic and cultural issues affecting tribal and non-tribal fishermen. In some parts of the state, although less so in Puget Sound, dams are a major factor in irrigation and industrial power. Additionally, the dams are under the control of a variety of public and private utilities, with varying forms of governance. For these, among other reasons, integrating hydro is complicated. In 2006, the

⁷⁵ In interviews with federal, tribal, state, and local officials and other community leaders were nearly unanimous in this impression.

Recovery Council authorized the formation of the H-Integration Leadership Group to try and address these issues. A joint policy and science H-Integration staff group was also formed to identify gaps related to integration issues in the draft recovery plan, develop a plan to fill those gaps, and provide training to local watershed groups to help them make progress on this aspect of their plans because very few watersheds submitted integrated plans. As noted earlier in this report, H-integration was acknowledged as a weakness of the Shared Strategy process and, therefore, an intended focus in the follow on efforts at implementation, which would include some upgrades in plans. This task force was an early recognition of this deficit and an attempt to both improve the result and keep it on the agenda for future work.

Climate change was not a factor in environmental decisions at the outset of the Shared Strategy. But the Recovery Council and the new PSP have since included it and are hoping to make progress in terms of engaging state government and obtaining more funding. Addressing this complex issue poses a significant challenge. The good news is that an infrastructure exists in which to discuss this issue, as well as improved trust in scientific information. However, the original TRT and the TRT structure are no longer available, and the new science advisory structure for the PSP began in 2008 and is still untested. Leaders as well as critics are concerned about how the plans and the various decision-making bodies in the salmon recovery process and in local governments will absorb climate change information as it becomes available.

The work of the Development Committee and later the Recovery Council was often carried out within subcommittees, usually supported by Shared Strategy staff and by staff of some of the council/committee members. Shared Strategy staff worked between the monthly meetings and usually far in advance on issues, in consultation with the chair and with the Policy Work Group, checking informally with watershed leads and others to ensure that the process kept moving and that the necessary groundwork for discussion was laid. Part of the top-down aspect of the effort was the constant anticipation and driving of the agenda, whether in terms of setting up deadlines and review procedures or obtaining studies.

A discussion of how to operate by consensus can be found in the Recovery Council's minutes. This was initiated by Bill Ross, a respected head of a Seattle-based mediation firm who began serving as a facilitator in the Shared Strategy process at Port Ludlow II in 2001. In February 2006, a more formalized way to achieve consensus was framed. There was some discussion of using a supermajority voting process, but Shared Strategy staff recommended keeping a consensus-based approach to "keep unity among the Council and retain the collaborative spirit in which the Recovery Plan was crafted as the group moves into the implementation phase." At a subsequent meeting in March 2006, Recovery Council members approved the consensus-based approach as long as a two-thirds quorum of council members was present. The quorum would ensure that Recovery Council decisions reflected the "composition, views, and will of the communities and agencies active in recovering salmon in the Puget Sound Region." Consensus

thus became the objective for all of the council's decisions, although the members reserved the right to reexamine the approach at a later date.⁷⁶

Watershed Planning Groups

All watersheds had substantial salmon habitat restoration efforts going prior to the advent of the Shared Strategy. A few of the groups were working to develop a plan to recover the populations, which by necessity included harvest, hatchery, and protection actions. As a result of the Shared Strategy, each of the 14 watersheds had an approved salmon recovery plan in place that takes the next step in developing a comprehensive approach to recovery, and (for the most part) all of the groups were strengthened in representation, access to technical assistance, and funding.

Individual watersheds were integral to the Shared Strategy process, and the final region-wide salmon recovery plan was largely a compilation of individual watershed plans, prepared with common standards and guidance and much interaction among watershed leaders and senior staff. Shared Strategy leaders and staff worked diligently to cultivate working relationships and build trust among local watershed groups to ensure participation in the Shared Strategy process. One of the fundamental reasons for the collaborative approach was to gain widespread commitment from watershed leaders and stakeholders and thus increase the likelihood that a recovery plan would be successfully implemented.

While some watershed groups had considerable experience (for example, the Nisqually River Council had worked for 20 years), many of the watersheds had become involved in this type of planning for the first time and at least initially, many lacked the experience, resources, technical expertise, relationships, and leadership to deal with such issues. Of particular concern was the lack of scientific and technical resources in many places.

The 14 watersheds in the Puget Sound were:

- East Kitsap (WRIA 15)
- Elwha/Dungeness (WRIA 18)
- Green/Duwamish (WRIA 9)
- Hood Canal (WRIA 16)
- Whidbey and Camano Islands – Island County (WRIA 6)
- Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish (WRIA 8)
- Nisqually (WRIA 11)
- Nooksack (WRIA 1)
- Puyallup/White and Clover/Chambers (WRIA 10 and 12)

⁷⁶ These quotes and paraphrase come from the Puget Sound Recovery Council; Thursday, March 23, 2006, 9:30 am-2:30 pm; Seattle Central Library, Seattle WA; Meeting Summary.

- San Juan Islands (WRIA 2)
- Skagit (WRIA 3/4)
- Snohomish (WRIA 7)
- South Sound (WRIA 13 and 14)
- Stillaguamish (WRIA 5)

See Appendix F for a map of the 14 watershed areas. In most cases, the watershed groups that produced plans under the Shared Strategy worked under the process established by the Salmon Recovery Planning Act (ESHB 2496). In a few cases, community watershed groups produced plans under the Watershed Planning Act (ESHB 2514) process. Under both processes, the local watershed committees were led by a locally prominent chairperson and composed of representatives from tribal government, county government, agricultural, environmental, property owner, developer, sport fishing, and other groups. Over time, regional representative of state and federal agencies with interests or property stewardship responsibilities in the area became involved. Many relationships that had been hostile and confrontational changed over time as these local watershed groups became increasingly effective and as shared accomplishments were achieved. The Shared Strategy purposely tried to encourage and cause funding to flow to local habitat restoration and other projects that would benefit salmon recovery. Many members, if participation was not part of their professional work, served as volunteers. Even those who were paid for salmon recovery as part of their work often did much of the Shared Strategy work on their personal time.

Each watershed group typically had a staff person assigned, usually from the county or “lead entity” staff to coordinate and follow through on its work and decisions. The degree and length of commitment among people who served on the committees and among staff were remarkable. However, the relationships among the groups represented on these committees often took much effort to develop. Shared Strategy leadership and staff worked to help nurture such relationships.

Each watershed committee was responsible for developing the salmon recovery plan for that watershed in response to the target population ranges recommended by the TRT, set by the WDFW and the tribes in their co-management relationship, and endorsed by the Development Committee. The watershed committees also submitted grant proposals to various funding agencies for habitat restoration projects and other efforts that would contribute to salmon recovery. The Shared Strategy had determined that during the planning phase, work should begin on some on-the-ground projects, mostly habitat restoration projects. These projects would help reduce the waiting time, forestall potential impatience, and create opportunities to demonstrate concrete progress produced by collaboration.

Many of the early proposals were submitted to the SRF Board, an entity established under the state’s Salmon Recovery Funding Act of 1999 (described earlier). The SRF Board provided \$25 million to \$35 million in funding each year. Applications were submitted by the lead entity for

the watershed, usually the county, on behalf of the watershed planning group. The lead entity was required to prioritize the projects for which it sought funding. The watershed lead was responsible for managing development of these proposals and fitting them in with local planning priorities.

There was great variability among the watershed committees in terms of their resources and experience in recovery planning. For some, like Nisqually (in Pierce County, near Tacoma and encompassing waters originating at Mount Rainier), Hood Canal (located across the Sound), Green/Duwamish, Lake Washington, Puyallup, and Snohomish, efforts at salmon recovery preceded the Shared Strategy. The latter three were part of the Tri-County effort, and Nisqually had an award-winning 20-year history of collaborative planning for salmon recovery consistent with farm viability, economic prosperity, and ecosystem preservation. Nooksack had a long history of working with nearby counties and with other constituencies in developing ways to protect water quality. In the Dungeness watershed, tribes and farmers had worked together over several decades to increase stream flows through conservation and other measures, despite years of contention. They had developed data sets and other tools that they were all willing to rely on, and they had put in place numerous improvements that increased in-stream flows and overcame other problems. Hood Canal had a pre-existing community effort at planning, with some state involvement.

Thus, many of these areas had substantial relationships in place, major commitments by county and tribal governments, and reliance on expertise in hydrology, biology, land use, and other areas. But in other watersheds, particularly outside the larger counties and places where tribes had built up significant technical expertise, staff and technical expertise were limited. This was a barrier to keeping up with the process and producing adequate plans. The TRT later helped to fill gaps in technical expertise, but the disparities were still evident.

Balanced and truly representative membership on the watershed committees was a key to producing realistic plans that stakeholders could support. For example, to address insufficient agricultural representation in at least one watershed planning group, Ruckelshaus and Kramer visited elected and appointed officials in the county to push for the needed representation. They persuaded a third-generation farmer who was highly regarded by his community to become involved. Although he says he joined in order to influence “what would be done, rather than have things done to me,” he ultimately took measures on his own property that were both protective of salmon and beneficial to his farm. In an interview, he described continuing efforts to affect farmers’ behavior through changed policies and practices. He was able to find common ground with tribes and environmental leaders, who also came to respect his interests.

Similarly, in another instance, the election of a county council member who opposed the process threatened to weaken support for the collaborative planning effort, particularly because salmon recovery planning was a campaign issue. Ruckelshaus and Kramer visited the new council member, put him in touch with council members in other counties from his political

party, and made sure he was briefed in other ways. The council member took a second look, became involved, and later became a strong supporter of the process and the policies that were recommended. Although he was later defeated in a re-election bid, he maintained his interest in salmon recovery work.

To ensure balanced membership on the local watershed committees, the Shared Strategy leaders often went to Development Committee/Recovery Council members or other contacts to help identify or recruit prospective committee members. They and the committee/council also helped watershed committees obtain funding from the SRF Board and other grant sources as well as in-kind contributions of staff and expertise from other entities. The TRT established a “buddy system” of TRT members and watershed committee members to help with technical issues. Two watershed liaisons on the Shared Strategy staff worked full time to provide information, encouragement, and support on technical, organizational, funding, political, and interpersonal issues.

As an experiment, the Shared Strategy created a “case study” format to provide additional technical and other assistance to Snohomish County, to see if such assistance would add depth and speed to the completion of the Snohomish plan. This additional intervention seems to have been valuable, but the planning process was too far along and things were moving too fast to duplicate this effort in other watersheds. Because the inequality of resources and, particularly, technical expertise, additional assistance of this sort could have helped many watersheds complete their plans with less conflict and strain and with greater quality and consistency, and also might have freed up senior Shared Strategy staff to focus on other difficult political or resource problems in a number of watersheds and in other quarters.

Partly to build local commitment to implementation and to ensure reflection of local realities and differences, the work of the local watersheds was to be the backbone of the regional plan. To gain quality, consistency, and integration sufficient for a regional plan and to apply goals and standards derived from scientific methods, the Shared Strategy organization ramped up rapidly to provide what assistance it could to these groups without stepping on local prerogatives and knowledge. This was a delicate relationship carried on largely by two watershed liaisons on the small Shared Strategy staff (their roles are described in detail later in this report).

The two watershed liaisons primarily provided technical assistance on planning, guidance on getting financial assistance, and other advice and information, and they carried information upward in the Shared Strategy structure—all positive, non-authoritative forms of influence. They also facilitated interaction with the TRT. Based on policy emerging from the Development Committee, the Shared Strategy did impose constraints such as population targets (see later detailed description of how these were set and used as benchmarks), deadlines for plan drafts, reviews of plan drafts, and other more traditional aspects of program management. There was initial resistance to these constraints and requirements, but in retrospect most watershed participants said the deadlines, standards and demands were important and necessary. As the

Shared Strategy staff and the overall process gained credibility, there was less resistance and greater understanding about the value of working together and providing unified and consistent products to the state and federal entities. Only a few watersheds remained at odds with these attempts at standardization or had other resentments. The Shared Strategy staff tried to be flexible with those that already had a significant planning efforts underway before the Shared Strategy came along. In perhaps two or three of these instances, the resentments or tensions were never fully resolved.

One remarkable development in 2007 was the watersheds' willingness to support the requirement of an annual report card for their implementation of the plan. Perhaps even more remarkably, in the last year of the Shared Strategy's existence, the watersheds supported the Recovery Council's policy of prioritizing projects and areas rather than demanding equitable resource distribution for all watersheds.

This turn of events is largely attributable to the degree of trust—as well as the depth of knowledge of regional salmon recovery needs—that had developed within and among all of the groups. But it also has roots in the initial policy of the Shared Strategy, which is often described as “no watershed left behind.” This is, in some sense, the opposite of the previously described hotspot strategy. Simply put, local and tribal governmental entities would not easily have subordinated their own interests without a collaborative process in which mutual trust was built over time. Although local elected officials would have been hard-pressed at this early juncture to voluntarily allow other local areas to receive proportionately more attention and resources, the tribes were in a particularly difficult position related at least partially to treaty rights and cultural traditions attached to salmon fishing and related habitat and water quality concerns. Yet local and tribal government leadership came to support at least the beginnings of this type of uneven resource allocation.

Initially, the “no watershed left behind” policy was accepted as policy by the Development Committee. At that juncture, it was indeed the opposite of the hotspot strategy, and its initial intent was to retain equitable resource allocation to all watersheds, probably based on perceived political necessity to preserve the collaboration and the broad support for salmon recovery. The policy evolved to acknowledge that some watersheds might need more resources early on, based on data about specific populations at imminent risk of extinction and the differing roles that various salmon populations play in recovery.

Most likely, any early attempts at watershed or similar prioritization would have resulted in opposition or possibly lawsuits had they been mandated by NOAA. Had the Shared Strategy recommended this at the outset, the effort would very likely have failed. By giving stakeholders equal status and participation and by giving the entire region a stake in governance of the

salmon recovery effort, a more focused policy could later be accepted as a relatively normal and regionally supported approach.⁷⁷

Watershed Implementation Leads Group

The watershed leads did not meet regularly until the recovery plan was submitted to NOAA in June 2005, although they did meet periodically before then. The individual and collective abilities and actions of watershed leads were among the most important variables in the Shared Strategy planning process. The role of watershed leads was to lead the development of local watershed recovery plans. In the first years of the Shared Strategy, the watershed liaisons on the Shared Strategy staff attended individual local watershed group meetings, met with local leaders, and provided general information and support to help watershed groups better understand what was needed for salmon recovery at the local level. However, it soon became evident that bringing the watershed leads together into a Watershed Implementation Leads Group would allow them to learn from one another and begin to build the necessary coordination across the ESU.

Before they began meeting monthly as the Watershed Implementation Leads Group, the watershed leads did take part in many meetings together. In the first year of the Shared Strategy, not all 14 watershed groups had signed on to the effort, so one of the first things the Shared Strategy staff did was to meet with local leaders and watershed staff to try and gain their voluntary participation. This took more time in some watersheds than in others⁷⁸—for example, in some watersheds Shared Strategy staff met separately with local elected officials and key stakeholder groups such as business and agricultural interests before the lead entity felt

⁷⁷ Elsewhere we will examine criticisms that the process was insufficiently top-down and that parochial interests were allowed too much influence, thereby diluting the results by paying insufficient attention to the science.

⁷⁸ While the study team became aware in reasonable detail of conflicts and disagreements at the watershed level with Shared Strategy, this study does not attempt to evaluate nor describe in detail those conflicts. Therefore, the study does not name those watersheds. The scope of the study required learning enough to understand the challenges and dynamics at work, but the scope did not permit assessment of each of the fourteen watersheds' relationship to Shared Strategy. Doing so would have required, we found, a detailed understanding of the salmon recovery and political challenges and salient aspects of the history of each. Instead, the study team visited or conducted formal interviews, focused conversations with participants, leaders staff and observers in 10 watersheds, and attended several meetings of the Watershed leads group, as well as reviewing with Shared Strategy staff the nature of interactions with each. Among those interviewed from watersheds were those who were critical of the interactions. In fairness to all, the wide range of watershed priorities, issues and history, the hurdles to fitting existing planning work into the new framework, the short time frame, the variability in technical and political support all made the task of gaining full communication or satisfaction a significant challenge.

comfortable or authorized to participate in a recovery effort that went beyond the ESHB 2496 habitat restoration and protection work they had been doing.

Future collaborative efforts in this kind of arena should not only bring in greater scientific and related technical resources (usually referred to as “technical resources” or “expertise” in this report) but should also strengthen the capacity of local leaders individually and collectively—to bring to bear greater skills and knowledge, a more regional perspective, and greater scientific input, much like the assistance given in the Snohomish “case study.” Whether the Watershed Implementation Leads Group could have been established earlier is a worthwhile question to examine. The timing of such an action is also important. For example, there was value in taking more than a year to gain the participation of each watershed group and build their trust. Initially, many already-existing watershed groups resisted the formation of the Shared Strategy coordinating nonprofit—in part because they feared they would lose control over their processes and because they wanted the funds to go toward restoration in their areas and not regional administration to fund the nonprofit. The timing and presentation of such central resources thus merits consideration in any other application of the approaches described in this report. Also, the time Executive Director Jim Kramer spent prior to the Port Ludlow agreements getting to know issues and people appears to have been an important investment that developed key relationships and trust that in a future process might be expanded if a modest amount of additional up front time can be utilized. Along with the technical and other resources noted above, possibly this might have contributed to ameliorating some of the friction and misunderstanding between a few of the watersheds and Shared Strategy. In other cases, the issues may have been too fundamental.

The Watershed Implementation Leads Group—the Watershed Leads, for short—included representatives of the 14 watersheds that submitted a plan to the Shared Strategy. After it was established in 2005, the group met monthly to discuss updates, plans, and policy issues presented by the Shared Strategy regional staff on the regional plan and to discuss progress and issues within each local watershed. Increasingly, the Watershed Leads demonstrated not only their knowledge about and commitment to their local area, but also their commitment to and perspective on Sound-wide needs, policies, and priorities. They were strong advocates for practical policies that dealt with local challenges as well as regional benefits.

The Watershed Leads were generally employees of the county or tribe, whichever was the designated lead entity in which the watershed was located, and had primary staff responsibility for coordinating the work of their own local watershed group. Each had the responsibility of working with the relevant county departments, tribes, environmental groups, landowner groups and others to coordinate policy and planning, build relationships, and implement plans—as well as carry out the many habitat restoration projects that were part of ESHB 2496 and were supported early in the Shared Strategy process. These positions were paid for by the lead entities and were often supplemented by salmon recovery funds made available through the SRF Board and other sources.

The Watershed Leads meetings had the following primary functions:

- **Information sharing.** The meetings helped keep the local groups informed and engaged in the implementation stage of the Shared Strategy. The meeting agendas provided an opportunity for the Shared Strategy staff to update the watersheds on implementation activities at the regional level and vice-versa. This information-sharing function of the meetings helped maintain a sense of progress and shared goals.
- **Introducing policy and problems.** The meetings increasingly became an opportunity for the Shared Strategy staff to bring up policy items at early stages of development for the Watershed Leads to discuss and critique and for watershed leads to raise issues, problems and suggestions. The Recovery Council could thus avoid passing a policy that was impractical in the view of the Watershed Leads. Also, if the Watershed Leads agreed with a policy or practice, it would be easier for the Recovery Council to consider. This vetting of policies by the Watershed Leads also helped create a sense among watersheds that local concerns were being addressed. The watershed leads were in a key position to bring ideas or problems forward for consideration by their peers and by Shared Strategy staff, often for further consideration. These meetings allowed and encouraged such problem solving and other initiation of issues.
- **Creating an informal network.** The meetings also helped to create a peer network among the watersheds. This led to greater information exchange outside of the meetings as well as other more formal collaboration. The peer network also resulted in an accountability function of its own, creating peer pressure to meet goals, deadlines, and other standards.

Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team (TRT)

In response to the ESA listings, NOAA organized its recovery planning efforts into eight discrete geographic areas, or domains, within Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and California. In Washington, these domains include the Puget Sound, Willamette/Lower Columbia, Interior Columbia (including the Mid-Columbia, Upper Columbia, and Snake River sub-domains), and Southwest Washington. (See Appendix G for a map of these areas.) NOAA established Technical Recovery Teams (TRTs) for each domain to provide scientific expertise as a foundation for developing area-based recovery plans for all ESA-listed salmon species.

NOAA Fisheries published *Recovery Planning Guidance for Technical Recovery Teams* as the primary guiding document for the TRTs. The primary purpose of the TRTs is to establish biological delisting criteria—objective and measurable criteria for determining at what point a species can be considered no longer “threatened.” TRTs are also expected to assess factors that have led to population declines, establish viability goals for salmon populations, and identify early actions for implementation with the greatest probability of benefiting salmon.

TRTs are not responsible for developing recovery measures to achieve viability goals because these require consideration of economic, social, and policy issues in addition to science.⁷⁹ NOAA Fisheries leaves these considerations to the various other federal, state, tribal, local, and private entities involved in recovery planning policy in each domain—in this instance, to the Shared Strategy. However, TRTs are expected to provide technical evaluation of the effectiveness of proposed recovery measures for fish populations in each domain.

The TRTs in most NOAA domains are composed of six to 11 respected scientists from different agencies, with varied expertise in salmon biology, population dynamics, conservation biology, ecology, and other disciplines applicable for setting recovery standards and measuring recovery progress. Each TRT member must meet three primary criteria:

- High achievement in a relevant discipline
- High standard of scientific integrity, independence, and objectivity
- A demonstrated interest and ability to work effectively in an interdisciplinary team setting

NOAA keeps scientific bodies such as TRTs separate from policy making—among other reasons, to preserve the scientists’ ability to give independent and credible scientific advice. For example, each of NOAA’s six regions has two distinct offices, a science center that conducts research, and a regional office that handles policy and management issues. In Washington, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center conducts independent research and then forwards its scientific conclusions to the Northwest Regional Office to inform permit and policy decisions. This approach was also expected for the TRTs; the NOAA Fisheries guidance document described a task wherein the TRTs’ biological delisting criteria would be “passed on to planners and policy makers,” who would then develop recovery measures based on these criteria. Thus, the expectation was set that scientific analyses would be completed separate from policy making.

NOAA called for nominations to the Puget Sound TRT in late 1999, about eight months after the listing of Puget Sound Chinook. The NOAA Northwest Regional Administrator, in consultation with the Northwest Fisheries Science Center director, selected the Puget Sound TRT members in early 2000 from a small pool of applications screened by an independent panel of National Academy of Science scientists. The initial members, representing a diverse mix of federal, tribal, state, and local scientists, were:

- Ken Currens, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

⁷⁹ NMFS. “Interim Endangered and Threatened Species Recovery Planning Guidance.” July 2006. <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

- Jim Doyle,⁸⁰ U.S. Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest
- Bob Fuerstenburg, King County Department of Natural Resources
- Bill Graeber, Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Kit Rawson, Tulalip Tribes
- Mary Ruckelshaus (chair), NOAA Fisheries, Northwest Fisheries Science Center
- Norma Sands, NOAA Fisheries, Northwest Fisheries Science Center
- Jim Scott, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Puget Sound TRT members retained their primary jobs at their respective places of employment but officially committed 25% of their time to NOAA and met at least once a month (more often later in the process). The TRT was housed within NOAA's Northwest Fisheries Science Center but reported to both the Science Center director and the Northwest Regional Administrator. The TRT received funding through appropriations from the Northwest Regional Office to support administrative costs.

Given its federal origins, the Puget Sound TRT's diverse composition and lack of regulatory authority assuaged public concerns that the science would be biased or co-opted by NOAA. This contributed to legitimizing the TRT as an unbiased, credible source of technical information. TRT membership deliberately included scientists both within and outside of federal government. Because the scientists participating in the process were broadly representative of various agencies and tribes, the affected and interested parties could be confident that the science would represent a balanced viewpoint. The TRT's lack of authority over agency policy also contributed to the acceptance of its technical recommendations. On the other hand there was criticism that the TRT recommendations were not more strictly followed. Reviewing the nature of the process and the structure shows some of the reasons for limitations on what could be "enforced." The purpose of the TRT was strictly advisory from NOAA's standpoint; the group had no role in regulatory decision-making and was not responsible for enforcement or implementation of agency policy.

When it was formed in 2000, the Puget Sound TRT was affiliated only with NOAA and had no official relationship or connection to other recovery planning efforts (such as the Tri-County effort or the Port Ludlow meetings) and did not have a specific relationship to Shared Strategy. Its main task was developing the recovery planning ranges for salmon recovery.⁸¹ These

⁸⁰ Was a member of the TRT for 2 years before retirement from the USFS; his position on the team was not subsequently filled.

⁸¹ The description of the Puget Sound TRT and its role is based on published sources such as "Integrated Recovery Planning for Listed Salmon: Technical Guidance for Watershed Groups in Puget Sound" and interviews with a number of its members, Shared Strategy staff, agency staff who worked with TRT members, NOAA leadership, Recovery Council and watershed group members, and others who worked with or closely observed TRT activities.

planning ranges were developed over the course of two years, during which time the Shared Strategy was gaining broad support as the main convener and facilitator of regional salmon recovery planning in Puget Sound. Largely based on these ranges, the watershed targets were set by the co-managers.

The Shared Strategy leadership recognized the importance of having an independent body of scientists to guide the development of recovery plans. Jim Kramer, the executive director of the Shared Strategy, began attending Puget Sound TRT meetings to understand the group's approach to creating scientific guidance and to determine whether opportunities existed for them to play a bigger role in support of the Shared Strategy's policy development. As he became more familiar with how the TRT operated and its process for establishing ranges, he began engaging its members and asking them to play more specific technical advisory roles in support of the planning efforts.

Initially, many Puget Sound TRT members had reservations about working more directly with the Shared Strategy because NOAA, not the Shared Strategy, had appointed them and the NOAA Fisheries guidance document had clearly stated that the TRT's primary responsibility was to develop biological delisting criteria. Even though the document also gave the TRT the task of providing scientific support and technical evaluation to recovery planners and policy makers, it was unclear how closely these groups could interact, given the traditional separation of science and policy.

Kramer recognized an opportunity for the TRT to bring a stronger scientific presence to the Puget Sound recovery planning efforts. From the very beginning at the Port Ludlow I meeting, NOAA, under Donna Darm's leadership, publicly committed the TRT to supporting the Shared Strategy planning process. The terms of the TRT/Shared Strategy relationship evolved through careful discussions and experience to more closely meet the needs of the Shared Strategy while remaining within the bounds of the TRT charter. From both the NOAA and Shared Strategy perspectives, this departure from the typical separation of science and policy could help the Shared Strategy recovery plan meet scientific standards and requirements under ESA.

In 2002, Dr. Ruckelshaus and Jim Kramer hired an outside facilitator to develop a mechanism by which regular communications and mutual education could occur between the scientists and policy makers. The result was an agreement for regular monthly meetings of the TRT and Policy Work Group. This enabled each group to retain its primary responsibilities and roles while ensuring that policy decisions were well informed by science and that scientists better understood the policy issues faced by the leadership and thus how to offer technical guidance in a way that more closely connected to the questions those leaders had. Later, a regular staff member, the associate director, served in the liaison role between the Shared Strategy and the TRT.

NOAA leadership agreed to allow the Shared Strategy to engage the Puget Sound TRT for the purposes described above, with the understanding that NOAA would retain ultimate oversight authority over TRT actions if any conflicts of interest occurred. As a mechanism for oversight over all TRTs, NOAA created a science panel to review the work of all the West Coast TRTs and to ensure the validity of the science. There are no reported examples of NOAA having any serious conflicts or invoking any oversight authority over the actions of the Puget Sound TRT.

Although NOAA never engaged in strict management of the TRT's daily operations, some efforts were made to provide NOAA policy and science direction beyond the initial NOAA Fisheries guidance document. The Northwest Regional Office, for example, recommended that the TRT focus first on identifying populations and delisting criteria for Puget Sound Chinook salmon and to address other ESUs separately. NOAA Fisheries also provided a technical report to the set of TRTs outlining basic principles for describing viable salmon populations and developing biological viability criteria. This ensured that each of the West Coast TRTs worked from a common scientific foundation and that their analyses were based on consistent biological principles.

The relationship that emerged between the Puget Sound TRT and the Shared Strategy was regarded as unique in the Washington recovery domain.⁸²

The primary guidance document created by the Puget Sound TRT, *Integrated Recovery Planning for Listed Salmon: Technical Guidance for Watershed Groups in Puget Sound*, described the necessary biological components of a recovery plan to fulfill ESA requirements and achieve the Shared Strategy's overall recovery objectives of harvestable salmon populations. Specifically, the document highlighted:

- The concept of a viable salmonid population (VSP) as the basic building block of a recovery plan
- The importance of an integrated analysis of habitat, harvest, and hatchery actions, including cumulative effects and interactions
- The importance of analyzing in-stream habitat and landscape processes
- Common steps in plan development
- Approaches for evaluating the level of certainty predicted by the recovery plans

⁸² This statement is based on interviews with those familiar with the Puget Sound TRT and its interactions with the Shared Strategy and others familiar with the other recovery areas. We did not interview TRT members or others in recovery areas elsewhere in the state as part of research for this report. The TRT role is sufficiently interesting to merit a separate study—including a comparison of specific TRT roles in the different Washington recovery areas, as well as other activities of such teams.

One barrier the TRT faced in creating the watershed guidance was the difficulty of articulating complex technical information in areas such as fish biology and ecology in an easily digestible format. After the first draft of the Puget Sound TRT guidance document was published, Shared Strategy staff members and watershed committee members reported that many watershed planners and policy makers were having difficulty understanding or using the information as presented. They communicated to the Shared Strategy staff that the guidance was too high-level and conceptual and did not contain enough specific examples or descriptions of how the concepts could be applied or incorporated into their plans.

The TRT members were initially baffled by this feedback, but they genuinely wanted to make sure their information was valuable and useful. The Shared Strategy staff and the Policy Work Group convinced the TRT to present the guidance in a different format to improve its clarity and usefulness. These three groups worked together to present the TRT's recommendations in a way that would more clearly indicate how the concepts related to key steps in the Shared Strategy planning process, who was responsible for answering key technical questions, and which tools could be used to estimate information such as the capacity and productivity of a population.

A revised draft of the guidance document was published in February 2003, and it was widely regarded as useful.⁸³ This was a key moment in the TRT's adoption of a less traditional role and embrace of nontraditional ways to have science affect local planning.

Watershed groups found the revised draft helpful for understanding the biological basis for recovery and helping to take a technical approach to recovery planning. The TRT attempted to provide a common scientific framework for watershed recovery plans given the varying levels of technical capacity and expertise in local planning groups. Its guidance helped to increase consistency among the plans developed by watersheds. The revised TRT document was an important attempt to level the playing field by describing common methods and approaches for local recovery plans to meet federal standards.

The revision process was also a learning experience for the TRT members; later, many of them said that working with Shared Strategy staff members and the Policy Work Group helped them to make their documents clearer and more relevant to the needs of the watersheds without compromising their scientific basis.

In November 2003, a few months after the revised TRT guidance was published, Shared Strategy staff held a meeting with watershed leads to gauge their progress in developing a technical framework for their plans (i.e., describing the limiting factors for salmon recovery in their

⁸³ "Integrated Recovery Planning for Listed Salmon: Technical Guidance for Watershed Groups in Puget Sound." February 3, 2003. <http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/resources.htm#tech>.

watershed and how their plan would address them). Shared Strategy staff wanted to use this meeting to help the watersheds compare their progress. Many of the watersheds had in fact made little progress on a technical framework for their plans, to the surprise of the Shared Strategy staff and the TRT. The meeting highlighted the fact that most of the watersheds were not technically prepared for the task of creating a scientifically credible plan that would be acceptable to NOAA. This was a key moment for Shared Strategy staff and the TRT in understanding the need for increased technical assistance. As a result, Shared Strategy staff asked the TRT to become more involved in the local planning efforts.

Although the TRT at first resisted the idea because of the time commitment involved, and the importance of maintaining independence and objectivity, the TRT members agreed to each take on the role of liaison to a specific watershed. The liaisons would serve as a direct point of contact to answer specific questions and provide feedback on recovery goals and plans from a technical perspective. The involvement of the TRT liaison was not mandatory for the watersheds; it was simply an additional service offered in support of their planning processes. Some TRT members attended watershed-level meetings on a regular basis, while others interacted on an as-needed basis. The liaison function opened formal and sometimes informal channels of communication between the watersheds and the TRT. Some watersheds developed good relationships with their TRT liaisons and felt comfortable picking up the phone to ask a technical question; others interacted less frequently and familiarly.

The TRT liaisons represented a critical capacity-enhancing function for the watersheds, particularly those that had less access to scientific resources. Most watersheds found assistance from the TRT to be highly beneficial and regarded TRT members as objective and independent.

Some critics of the TRT liaison function did not feel that it was sufficiently helpful in all areas and failed to spread the TRT's considerable technical resources evenly or strategically across the watershed groups. In particular, critics did not agree with the TRT's choice to do a focused case study in the Snohomish watershed and not others. Many felt that this assistance made the Snohomish plan more scientifically complete and advanced than the others and that the TRT case study concept was presented as if other watersheds could take the lessons learned in the Snohomish and apply it in their watersheds, but that in reality the case study was of use only to Snohomish. As noted earlier, had there been more time or resources or an earlier recognition of the need for and value of this kind of technical help, more could have been done in the way of accelerating or upgrading the plan development and quality. This is a valuable lesson for future efforts.

Scientific Review of the Recovery Plans

The first of two internal science and policy reviews of the watershed draft plans occurred in June 2004. The Policy Work Group (also known in this capacity as the Policy Review Committee) led the review from a policy standpoint, while the Puget Sound TRT led the technical review. The

2004 review represented the first review in an iterative process designed by Shared Strategy leaders and the TRT to provide technical feedback to watershed plan authors.

Because of the voluntary nature of the Shared Strategy process, this review had to be carefully designed. The purpose of this early review was to highlight areas that needed to be strengthened to increase the certainty of the plans' outcomes for salmon. The TRT reviewed all of the watershed plans as a group, and then divided the 14 watershed plans among the seven TRT members so each member would become familiar with the details of a few watershed plans and their context. In addition, the TRT members took responsibility for reviewing the parts of all the plans that related their own area of expertise (for example, harvest or hatchery management).

The TRT members observed great disparities in the plans' levels of completion and technical sophistication. For example, it was clear which watershed groups had strong teams of biologists available to them at the local level and which did not. Most of the TRT members agreed that these early reviews resulted in greatly improved plans for the next review cycle. For instance, after the first round of reviews several watershed groups were asked to sharpen their rationale for the choices that they were making. During the period between review cycles, the TRT members made themselves available to the watersheds whose plan they had been assigned to review. In many instances, the watersheds sought their assistance, and significant effort was made by the TRT team members to be responsive.

For the second review in the spring of 2005, in order to ensure objectivity, the TRT supplemented its review by adding external reviewers who had not been involved in assistance to watersheds. The review teams in this round each had one TRT member and three or four external technical reviewers recruited from agencies, tribes, and universities. The TRT member who had been assisting a given watershed was not part of this review team. This arrangement allowed the TRT to provide assistance during this very important year of plan development and also to provide the needed objective and credible review.

By deliberately using both internal and external reviewers, the Puget Sound TRT was able to maintain the advantage of its members' familiarity with the watersheds, as well as to ensure rigorous, objective scientific reviews of each plan and avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest. The 2005 review aimed to evaluate the scientific basis for the actions described in the plans and create "certainty scores" to assess the probability that a given action would result in the expected outcomes for salmon. The TRT and the Shared Strategy also worked together using the results of the technical reviews to identify the strengths and remaining gaps in the plans and recommend approaches for addressing the gaps. Their gap analysis was incorporated into the individual watershed profile sections of the regional plan submitted to NOAA by the Shared Strategy in June 2005. It was also published in November 2005 in a separate document called *Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team (TRT) Review Comments on May 2005 Salmon Recovery Plans*.

Interviewees from local watersheds, federal and state agencies, tribes, the Shared Strategy, and the TRT said the rigor of these scientific reviews helped to enhance the quality and consistency of the watershed plans by highlighting common weaknesses and providing recommendations for improvement. Critics of the TRT review process said it did not push the watersheds far enough toward technical consistency across plans. Most of those close to the process, including TRT members and Shared Strategy staff, also recognized that not all plans achieved a full level of technical consistency with the recovery targets. The voluntary nature of the process and limits on expertise, resources, influence, and time were among the barriers to achieving this. Eventually, the judgment boiled down to either demanding a further rewrite—and therefore risking noncompliance or dropouts from the planning process—or accepting the effort made and the relationships built and working to improve the plans as the implementation process went forward. The latter approach prevailed. (These were apparently not easy decisions, but tools were available in the follow on process to help improve the plans. Had the plans been more problematic, this might not have been the decision, it was reported.)

The TRT faced a number of challenges in maintaining a credible scientific process while building trust, as detailed in the next sections.

Maintaining the Boundary Between Science and Policy

The close working relationship that emerged between Shared Strategy staff and the TRT members created a challenge in maintaining appropriate boundaries between science and policy. While their relationship clearly departed from the traditional interface of science and policy, most TRT members believed that their role as scientists and science advisors should not cross the line into policy or decision making. Rather than maintaining that separation by avoiding communication, the TRT and Shared Strategy staff explored ways to get the most benefit from the application of science. These discussions resulted in the TRT being more alert to policy needs and to the limitations and barriers that local watersheds would face in using scientific information and applying scientific techniques. The revising of the initially confusing TRT guidance document is an example of how dialogue proved highly beneficial.

Many of the policy-oriented members of the Development Committee (later the Recovery Council) and watershed groups initially believed that the TRT's purpose was to tell them what policies to implement to recover a sustainable and harvestable salmon population. The TRT guidance and liaison functions further reinforced the idea that the TRT was there to provide answers about how to achieve recovery goals. The TRT expended much effort maintaining the boundaries of its role by educating policy makers and planners about the appropriate use of science to evaluate the effectiveness and scientific certainty of different policy options. The TRT supported local decision making by characterizing the likely outcomes of the plans and giving each plan a 'certainty score', but it did not otherwise recommend choices. Because of limited scientific capacity, in only one instance (in the Snohomish watershed) did the TRT quantitatively model the outcomes of potential recovery strategies.

Preserving Scientific Objectivity and Credibility

The importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries between science and policy relates directly to the challenge the TRT faced in preserving its scientific objectivity and credibility with the affected and interested parties and fellow scientists. Some critics have questioned the objectivity and credibility of the TRT's science due to its close working relationship with the policy side of the process. TRT members would argue that they were able to maintain neutrality and avoid conflicts of interest in two primary ways—adherence to scientific protocol and reliance on external peer review.

The TRT was careful to follow scientific protocol in its work—including using widely accepted scientific methods such as evaluating population viability using key characteristics of each viable salmonid population (VSP). External peer review was the primary mechanism used to ensure the validity of its methods and findings. The TRT published its work in peer-reviewed science publications, which is the chief method for gaining acceptance from other scientists. It also submitted work to the Recovery Science Review Panel, an independent group of six highly qualified scientists convened by NOAA to perform the following functions:⁸⁴

- (1) Review core principles and elements of the recovery planning process being developed by the NMFS; (2) Ensure that well accepted and consistent ecological and evolutionary principles form the basis for all recovery efforts; (3) Review processes and products of all Technical Recovery Teams for scientific credibility and to ensure consistent application of core principles across ESUs and recovery domains; and (4) Oversee peer review for all recovery plans and appropriate substantial intermediate products.

As described earlier, the TRT also sought the opinions of several outside technical reviewers and invited them to join the watershed plan review teams in order to increase the diversity of scientific views about the plans.

Creating Trust within the TRT

Diversity of scientific perspectives was important to the process because it contributed to strong, credible science. However, it was also the source of some initial tensions within the TRT. Because the traditional model for NOAA was to keep science and policy separate, agency scientists were accustomed to being more removed from on-the-ground fisheries policy or management. In this case, which featured a mixture of scientists who were more academically oriented and those who were more involved in applied work, some academic scientists were

⁸⁴ Salmon Recovery Science Review Panel. Report for meeting held in December 2004; Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NMFS; Santa Cruz, CA. www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/trt.

concerned that the applied scientists might focus too heavily on the management side of issues and compromise the objectivity of the science. As it turned out, this problem never materialized and the tensions were worked out over time as TRT members built personal relationships and came to recognize each other's scientific abilities.

Establishing Trust between the TRT and the Shared Strategy

It took time and effort to build a functional working relationship between the TRT and the Shared Strategy policy team. As described previously, the TRT was initially uncomfortable with the Shared Strategy's role in suggesting additional, more hands-on TRT activities because TRT members didn't know to what extent the Shared Strategy leaders and staff understood the TRT's mission, scientific standards, and protocols or whether the Shared Strategy would try to lead them away from their original purpose. Some TRT members were also unsure of the Shared Strategy's commitment to achieving a scientifically credible and rigorous regional plan.

The Shared Strategy staff, who did not have a substantial scientific background, also had to learn about the proper application of science. They came to understand and appreciate the role of science and attention to protocols. This dialogue was often tense at the beginning, but the mutual willingness to listen, be flexible, and maintain professional integrity combined to produce a paradigm for science/policy interaction that merits broader use.

The Shared Strategy staff built credibility with the TRT by not backing away from rigorous scientific advice. For example, the TRT often gave advice that watershed groups resisted, such as recommending that watersheds structure their plans around research questions and hypotheses about the factors contributing to salmon decline and what could be done to reverse it. This approach was not well received by many watershed planners, for whom it was a foreign concept. Shared Strategy staff, especially the watershed liaisons, were, in order to have a scientifically credible plan, willing to do the hard work to try and influence the watersheds to adopt this approach. This kind of action demonstrated to the TRT that the Shared Strategy was committed to a science-based process.

Many TRT members contributed to this nontraditional approach, but by all accounts much of the credit goes to Dr. Ruckelshaus, respected by her colleagues in and out of government. She worked throughout the process to maintain the scientific standing and integrity of the TRT effort. She was said to be initially resistant to the greater role for the TRT sought by the Shared Strategy. However, through detailed discussions with Kramer, Shared Strategy staff, and her own team, and in consultation with her scientific supervisors and peers at NOAA, she provided quiet and effective leadership that allowed the TRT to carefully develop this important role. Despite criticism that some watersheds should have been forced to go further, the nonbinding efforts of the TRT and Dr. Ruckelshaus are widely praised for bringing science to the local watersheds and to the process, and for providing greater rigor in the planning effort overall.

Relevant to the discussion of the TRT, much of the criticism of the Shared Strategy has come from those on the periphery of, or otherwise involved in the science community. Interestingly, most of the criticisms are acknowledged by Shared Strategy senior leadership, staff, and participating policy makers at NOAA, the state, and the tribes. Many of these criticisms are also reflected in the NOAA Supplement,⁸⁵ which qualifies acceptance of the regional plan and notes deficits that require attention. However, the critics tend to acknowledge the quality of the TRT members and the important role of science in the process.

Interestingly, among the critics who most strongly raise concerns about inadequacies in certain of the plans relative to the population targets and known science, none that we interviewed have noted substantial ways that the TRT could have been more effective, and a substantial proportion of critics praise the individual TRT members and their work. However, illustrating the validity of many of the criticisms, the key issues of plan adequacy and others raised in the criticisms are part of or are being considered as part of the next phases of planning and implementation for salmon recovery and Puget Sound cleanup.⁸⁶

Criticism of the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound

As part of its work, the study team sought the views of organizations and knowledgeable individuals that had been critical of the Shared Strategy process or results. Interviews with avowed critics constituted about 10% of the formal interviews undertaken, as well as a portion of the focused conversations and less formal discussions that contributed to the study. For the most part, the frequently mentioned criticisms included: Insufficient consideration of climate change impacts, insufficient or variable quality of some of the plans relative to recovery goals, insufficient consideration of harvest impacts and H-integration, insufficient accountability for plan results, and inadequate commitments and control over land use and other local policies that would ultimately determine plan implementation. These were considered valid and were also offered, unsolicited, by many of the top Shared Strategy leaders and staff. Many of these issues were explicitly included in the post-plan work agendas and moved into the PSP agenda by Shared Strategy leadership and staff, and NOAA explicitly recognized many of them in the Supplement that accompanied its acceptance of the plan. Criticism during the process was also helpful, as for example, increasing the focus on near shore impacts, and insuring inclusion of most of these important issues into the PSP agenda. The substance of these concerns is shared by many who also held a more positive view of the overall process and value of the plans,

⁸⁵ NMFS Northwest Region. "Final Supplement to the Shared Strategy's Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan." November 17, 2006. www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/plan.

including a number of strong supporters and active participants, and especially by Shared Strategy management and leadership.

The major—but not the only—difference between the external critics and the Shared Strategy leadership and participants' recognition of these criticisms is the following: Those on the inside saw a large degree of progress and considered the problem solving infrastructure for further progress armed with the NOAA Supplement—and the PSP—as major achievements in light of the barriers, and as a basis for resolving the yet to be addressed issues. Many critics were less sympathetic with the challenges in getting to this point and believed that more should have been done before gaining NOAA approval, or the further funding. In some instances the critics were not hopeful about the PSP process, although many of them were.

In our interviews, Shared Strategy leadership made among the most detailed and comprehensive presentation of the risks, critical path variables, holes, and problems in the plan and its implementation. Many of the issues, such as those related to gaining changes in land use policies, which under present state policy are largely determined at the county level, were viewed by staff and Shared Strategy leadership as longer term issues that would have to be worked on following the initial agreements on plan and implementation structure. As the plan deadline loomed, the leadership determined that what could be accomplished during the period of the Shared Strategy's existence was the development of the plan and infrastructure for implementation, including further decision making, monitoring, coordination, accountability and gaining results. They also recognized the degree of trust (however imperfect), relationships, and new sense of regional responsibility and interdependence, as well as influence, which were now present. Approval, funding, and full establishment of the agreed upon mechanisms for continued progress would be better than to lose this progress in infrastructure and relationships by refusing to recommend acceptance of the plan, despite remaining inadequacies or gaps that were recognized.

The critics on these issues that are also supporters expressed the hope and probability that such further progress would occur, and those that were more broadly critical were normally less optimistic, and were further chagrined that Ruckelshaus, Kramer, NOAA Fisheries or others with influence didn't force those issues harder.

Probably, acceptance of all the local plans, and the resultant regional plan, represented a judgment by the Development Committee and subsequently NOAA that this was such a large step forward and the resultant infrastructure for ongoing progress so significant that it warranted acceptance on the merits of the progress shown and the prospects for results. We did not detect that in interviewing any of the officials who participated in these decisions any sense of either resigned acceptance or unrealistic views about the challenges yet to be faced.

Essentially, the main disagreements are over whether or not more could have been required or accomplished in the time available for the planning. Some of that centers on whether or not

Ruckelshaus or Kramer, for example, could have forced more movement on the part of local governments, or that Kramer and the staff, or the Development Committee, could have forced certain of the plans to have been more fully developed by withholding approval or otherwise refusing to accept them. Since the study team did not do individual case studies on the development of each of the 14 plans, we cannot fully evaluate this. In response to specific questions about methods that might have been employed, few specific suggestions were made that could have overcome in real time the deficits in resources, technical ability, and other barriers to a more complete plan, given the time and resources available.

All but a few of the critics noted that, despite their concerns and the continued uncertainty of the biological outcome, the infrastructure and funding now operating around salmon recovery provided a significant opportunity and hope that it would be used well, and that serious progress could be made. Certainly some things, in hindsight could have been done better or sooner. Nonetheless, the Shared Strategy leadership acknowledged the criticisms and accepted that what could be done was done and the careful effort in structuring the ongoing implementation work, and providing approval, encouragement, and resources would be the means by which the remaining issues could best be addressed. Whether or not that will be successful is awaited by fans and critics alike.

In summary form, the criticism can be evaluated as follows:

- These criticisms raise valid issues that would affect the quality of the outcome. An inadequate plan that does not sufficiently provide or protect habitat, for example, threatens the intended outcome. Inadequate consideration of hatchery and harvest impacts has the same affect.
- Many of these criticisms have been raised without reference to or appreciation for the barriers and challenges involved in addressing them in the Shared Strategy period, and without reference to the possibility of managing through many of them in the next phase, which has funding and an useful infrastructure for progress. When asked specifically about these possibilities in light of the mechanisms, policies and funding in place, most critics acknowledged these possibilities.
- However, the shortcomings raised in the primary criticisms were also recognized by Shared Strategy leadership and are significantly incorporated into the work plans they developed and reflected substantially in the PSP plans and mechanisms.
- While some different approaches or emphasis could have addressed, perhaps, some of the shortcomings, as was done in adjusting to better consider nearshore issues, this is in many respects hindsight. As such, these issues should be in the future plans, but the pace and demands of the process make most of the present criticisms more useful as indicators of important future actions than as inputs to evaluating the effort. To the extent that the substantive concerns are not in the NOAA Supplement and/or in the ongoing plans, they would merit greater attention. The criticisms about whether or not Ruckelshaus or others could have forced certain

additional actions do not seem well founded when one examines the things that were achieved through joint problem solving and persuasion against the back drop of having limited resources and time, and no formal authority.

- Other than a very few critics, who seemed not to have followed the effort closely and were not aware of a number of significant later developments, even the harshest critics acknowledged the potential for the ongoing activities of the PSP, which include the Shared Strategy results and infrastructure for implementation and policy problem solving, as an important achievement.
- The leaders of Shared Strategy and those in the PSP (Because of its scope, this study did not interview new PSP leadership) seem to recognize the challenges these issues present.

Transition to the Puget Sound Partnership

At the end of 2007, following the discontinuation of the Shared Strategy's nonprofit organization, the Recovery Council and Watershed Leads group became the institutional memory of the recovery planning effort under the new Puget Sound Partnership. Although the same interests are represented on the Recovery Council, leadership in some local watersheds are, as of the date of this report uncertain about the new process and about whether they will get the same level of support and responsiveness from the new state agency as they did under the Shared Strategy. To address their concerns, the Recovery Council committed to a number of key functions that will provide leadership and support for the work of local watersheds.

Shared Strategy Staff and Leadership Functions

The Shared Strategy for Puget Sound pursued its mission to work with communities to restore salmon by providing watershed support and financial planning, broadening support for salmon recovery, and implementing outreach. Each of these functions is described in greater detail in the upcoming sections.

Providing Guidance to Watersheds

One of the primary functions of the Shared Strategy was to provide individual guidance and oversight to each of the 14 watersheds. The liaisons helped guide watersheds through the development of their local recovery plan and provided assistance and resources as needed. Although small, the staff provided crucial strategic and operational support and advice and was the engine for coordinating the previously disparate efforts into a whole effort and plan overseen by the development committee.

In order for the Shared Strategy to provide helpful assistance that watershed groups would take into account, trust had to be built between the watershed liaison and the watershed group. The ability of the watershed liaisons to build trust resulted from their constant efforts to understand the complex dynamics at play in the watersheds, as well as continual meetings and exchanges

between the two groups. These efforts gave most watershed groups confidence that the liaisons would represent the interests of the watersheds' interests in the overall planning process.

Throughout the planning process, watershed liaisons pushed watershed groups to think more strategically about their community's recovery goals and the tools available to achieve those goals. Shared Strategy staff used various tools and processes to increase the sophistication of local recovery plans and to bring local planning efforts under the overall regional strategy. They helped to maintain a consistent approach to plan development across all watersheds by establishing standard components for all plans, including an H-integration (harvest, hatchery, habitat, and hydropower) analysis, a 10-year implementation plan, and an adaptive management plan. They managed the technical reviews and policy reviews of the watershed plans through the TRT and the Policy Work Group, respectively, to ensure that local plans used the best available science and recommended policies consistent with the regional plan. Many watersheds resisted including regulatory issues—property rights or harvest and hatchery issues—for fear of bringing conflict into the communities. Shared Strategy staff worked to educate the watersheds on the importance of understanding the full picture of how H's are integrated and of not relying solely on voluntary habitat protection and restoration in their recovery strategy.

Broadening Support for Salmon Recovery

The Shared Strategy staff and leadership actively worked to broaden federal, state, and local support for salmon recovery among elected officials and the public. Its association with visible and respected regional leaders such as Ruckelshaus and easy access to local leadership added value and enabled greater support to be built for the salmon recovery process. Local watershed groups were impressed by the personal commitment and investment of regional leaders as well as their willingness to intervene in the planning process to keep it moving forward. For instance, in a number of watersheds, Ruckelshaus and Kramer met personally with county commissioners, agricultural leaders, tribal leaders and other interests to address problems and help work through local conflicts. Watershed liaisons were important in identifying when a problem in the watersheds required the attention of regional leaders such as Kramer and Ruckelshaus, and in strategizing about how to most effectively use their leadership abilities.

Tribal participation in the Shared Strategy provides an example of how regional leaders helped broaden support for the salmon recovery process. Many have noted that the relationships with the tribes were among the most important ones cultivated by the Shared Strategy. Many watershed groups and state agencies were convinced to participate in the collaborative process because the Shared Strategy provided access to and could work with the tribes. The participation of tribal leaders such as Billy Frank, Jr., on the Shared Strategy board of directors and tribal scientists Kit Rawson and Ken Currens on the Puget Sound TRT helped convince tribal members that the process would consider tribal interests and perspectives. Even though some

tribes chose to leave the process, the Shared Strategy was able to continue dialogue with them and in most cases maintain open communication and mutual trust.

The Shared Strategy also set regional goals and timelines for completion of draft and final plans, such as the June 2005 internal deadline for the watersheds to submit their plan to NOAA Fisheries. Although June 2005 was essentially an arbitrary date, Shared Strategy staff pushed for the watersheds to meet the deadline in order to keep them accountable for their progress. The Shared Strategy did not have formal authority to enforce the deadline, but it was successful in using informal mechanisms such as friendly competition, consideration of reputation, and peer pressure to ensure that all 14 watersheds completed their plans by June 2005.

Implementing Outreach

A key element of the Shared Strategy effort was a comprehensive strategic communications plan. The plan called for outreach to those involved in the watershed planning and those in the agencies, leaders in affected communities, federal and state legislative leaders, the governor's office, and other policy makers. Key messages, talking points, and editorials were prepared to support outreach efforts by Kramer, Ruckelshaus, and selected members of the nonprofit board (such as Evans and Munro) and the Development Committee/Recovery Council (including Billy Frank, Jr., Terry Williams, Bob Lohn, and Ron Sims). A number of other outreach tools were employed, including a monthly newsletter, rewards and recognition, press outreach, and two large summit meetings that each attracted hundreds of people. These efforts helped to create a community of those focused on salmon recovery, and one where the Shared Strategy had a central importance.

An important element of the communications strategy was to provide positive recognition and support for successful efforts. Those recognized included a broad spectrum of tribes, landowners, local groups, agencies, state and local elected officials, and others, both well known and unknown. This approach allowed the Shared Strategy, which had no formal authority, to reinforce positive action. It was also a sign of genuine respect for these activities in support of effective planning and salmon recovery.

An online newsletter was produced monthly from 2003 to 2006 and sent to a distribution list of more than 3,000 stakeholders, elected officials, observers, and participants in the Shared Strategy. The newsletter focused on upcoming activities, progress, challenges, reminders of goals and deadlines, and success stories of salmon recovery in the watersheds, and it provided a venue for recognizing outstanding work. The value of the newsletter partially can be measured by the frequent and regular submissions of information, story leads, related upcoming events, and reports by watershed leads, environmental groups, and agency staff. Before this regular communications vehicle was launched, Ruckelshaus and Kramer would often hear complaints that people didn't know what was happening outside their own area of focus. The newsletter was discontinued in 2006 when the focus shifted to the transition to the PSP and implementation, which required a different allocation of staff time.

Recognition and awards, including a “Pioneers of Conservation” award, helped generate commitment and interest. The Pioneers of Conservation program also provided additional funding to local groups involved in salmon recovery. Its establishment was supported by farm and environmental groups and was aimed at agricultural and small forest landowners.

Perhaps the most visible outreach effort took the form of two “Salmon Summits,” one held in 2003 and the other in 2005. These two-day events were instrumental in bringing stakeholders together and helped create a sense of unity within the salmon recovery community. Scholarships to cover registration costs made it possible for smaller jurisdictions to have staff and officials participate in the summits. These events appeared to have a significant impact on progress, commitment, opportunities for coordination and awareness among both watershed-level participants and otherwise distant policy makers that something could and was happening. Issues and opportunities were brought to the attention of all.

Watershed liaisons and other Shared Strategy staff carried out a recruitment drive to encourage attendance at the summits. The watershed liaisons strategically recruited leaders in watersheds who would be persuasive and encourage others to attend. For example, the liaisons recruited attendees from one conservation district, who in turn persuaded other conservation districts to attend. The attendance of a diverse and influential group of stakeholders, such as tribal leaders, mayors, department heads with responsibility for natural resources, conservation district leaders, and many others demonstrated the relevance of the summits. Kramer also reached out to the agricultural community, which had less history of interaction with these other groups.

At the first summit, in January 2003, the Shared Strategy gave out awards to recognize watershed groups for their planning efforts. The summit focused on science, planning, and other elements important to the beginning of the process, and the mood was somewhat uncertain and tense.⁸⁷ One of the main outcomes of this first summit was the engagement of people who were not traditionally connected with state and local level natural resource planning—most notably leaders from the agricultural community, as well as others. The gathering thus helped foster an emerging sense of unity across the groups and demonstrated interest in their work.

A key component of the first Salmon Summit was breakout groups that focused on topics critical to salmon recovery in Puget Sound. The breakout groups allowed participants to learn about specific aspects of salmon recovery from other stakeholders. In the end, the structure of the first Salmon Summit fostered a sense of inclusion and shared challenges.

⁸⁷ In addition to input from interview and archive data, one member of the study team attended both Summits.

The second Salmon Summit, in January 2005, was held before the watershed recovery plan submission deadline to celebrate successes to date, inspire commitment to production of the 10-year implementation plans, and discuss remaining steps for finalizing the integrated Puget Sound recovery plan due that spring. The regional strategy was also presented at this second Salmon Summit. Altogether, the two summits brought participants together and enhanced the Shared Strategy community, with the second summit building on accomplishments and relationships that had been established. Its main purpose and outcome was to build or strengthen support for specific recovery strategies that were being proposed in the plan. Participants (twice the number at the first summit) had the chance to offer input on these proposals and to make statements of commitment to implement them. The increased degree of unity, optimism, and strategic focus was evident to those who had attended the earlier summit. One could also see the greater sophistication of the staff and overall effort, and a greater sense of confidence in the overall work and possibilities. Critics were also present and spoke up in small group and plenary sessions.

The summits were also venues for significant information sharing across watersheds and among federal and state officials, landowners (including farmers and property rights advocates), and others in the community. Both summits featured work by local artists to incorporate the “heart and spirit of salmon and the environment” into the technical and policy proceedings.

Each summit included appearances by the governor, Senator Murray or Representative Dicks, Billy Frank, Jr., William Ruckelshaus, Bob Lohn and other prominent officials. The presence and public comments by these officials appeared to generate commitment and motivation as they displayed their commitment and confidence. The awards and the statements of the officials garnered attention in the local and regional media.

Although these major, visible events involved the entire Shared Strategy staff, they were planned and coordinated by the Shared Strategy’s associate director, a position that also included responsibility for the outreach activities noted above, in consultation with watershed leaders, the Development Committee/Recovery Council, and Policy Work Group members. These summits required an enormous amount of preparation, both substantively and logistically, and included work by contractors on logistics and by volunteers from universities and many parts of the community for facilitating break-out sessions, note taking, and other assistance. Private money financed much of the cost of these events so they would not be primarily at public expense.

Towards an effort to build political will in support of salmon recovery in the broader community, the Shared Strategy hired Cocker-Fennessy Consulting Group, a prominent policy and communications firm, to help craft consistent and clear messages to the public via the media and other channels. This and similar efforts sought to cause the messages received by stakeholders to be clear, consistent, and conducive to positive perceptions of salmon recovery, but without minimizing the challenges.

This outreach work appears to have been critical to developing awareness of and support for the effort among participants and officials who would have to cooperate with the salmon recovery plans. They seem also to have been critical to gaining broader state and federal financial support. Watershed leads, especially those in jurisdictions with fewer resources, frequently requested outreach and communications help from Shared Strategy staff.

A major form of outreach was the development and publication of the final regional plan, which included not only the 14 watershed plans but also background information and a region-wide overview to explain the context. This report also discussed how remaining gaps would be addressed in local plans or by regional entities.

Overall, these outreach functions—which are often neglected in large-scale collaborative processes—were critical to the achievements of the Shared Strategy. This was particularly so because of the wide and diverse geography and culture covered by the Shared Strategy plan, and the many frustrations and failures that preceded this planning effort.

Shared Strategy Staff Functions

The primary function of the Shared Strategy staff was to coordinate the salmon recovery planning effort. The staff positions (established in the original Port Ludlow agreement) and the individuals who held them between 2002 and 2007 (when the nonprofit was phased out) were as follows:⁸⁸

- Executive Director: Jim Kramer
- Associate Director (a position that later absorbed the communications function): Jagoda Perich-Anderson (2003-2006); Millie Judge (2006-2007)
- Watershed Liaisons: Carol MacIlroy (WRIAs 1-7) and Margee Duncan (WRIAs 8-19); Rebecca Ponzio became a watershed liaison in the final year or so, joining MacIlroy and Duncan
- Communications Director: Mark Glyde (2002-2003)
- Office Manager: Dominique Lewis

⁸⁸ Shared Strategy for Puget Sound website: <http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/who-we-are.htm#Staff>. Accessed January 6, 2008. Diane Hodgson, a long time assistant to William Ruckelshaus, who prefers always to remain behind the scenes, contributed enormously to the effort, well beyond what might have been strictly required by her duties. Her unsung work includes working closely with Kramer and others to anticipate and ensure crucial and timely linkages of Ruckelshaus and policy officials, contact between Ruckelshaus and front line landowners and local officials, and helping with other priorities including fund raising, press outreach and anything else required, many of which she was in a unique position to provide. Her work reflected a clear and unique understanding of how to benefit the effort by availability of the time and relationships that Ruckelshaus could bring to such an endeavor.

A few staffing changes were made during the lifespan of the Shared Strategy nonprofit. Generally, these changes were made to accommodate the personal situations of the staff members or increased workloads. The size of the staff relative to the demands of the work is astoundingly small. The staff not only gained the respect and cooperation of those with resources and expertise and facilitated a great deal of cooperative work, but they also carried out focused, well-planned work while maintaining flexibility and a willingness to learn. They also understood that they would have to build a viable planning infrastructure that could transition to the even more difficult implementation phase. The authors of this report had a number of opportunities to observe them in action as well as to hear about their work from Watershed Leads, the Policy Work Group, the Recovery Council, and others.

Because the organization itself, and therefore, the staff members had no formal authority, they adopted a work style that built influence by demonstrating competence, respect, and trustworthiness and by providing thoughtful and systematic assistance to the watersheds, Policy Work Group members, Recovery Council, and others.

Watershed Liaisons

The role of the watershed liaisons was to help guide watershed groups in their planning efforts. The liaisons provided assistance on many levels, given the great variation among the watersheds in terms of resources, internal relationships, and experience. This function was performed for 14 watersheds with only two FTE staff, splitting the responsibility at seven watersheds each. Margee Duncan and Carol MacIlroy were the watershed liaisons for the majority of the salmon recovery planning period from May 2002 to June 2007. A third liaison, Rebecca Ponzio, was hired to assist with the additional workload after the recovery plan was submitted and approved by NOAA. MacIlroy and Duncan carried an enormous work load under extreme time and resource pressures, shaping the role with Kramer's guidance as they proceeded.

The watershed liaison position was a key element in convincing local stakeholders that the Shared Strategy would listen to their concerns and that the process would help link their local efforts to a larger regional effort. The liaisons worked closely with tribes and local salmon recovery planning groups, meeting on average once a month but occasionally more often and maintaining frequent telephone and e-mail contact. These meetings and close working relationships allowed liaisons to gain perspective and insight into the differing needs of each watershed.

The liaisons were able to develop a firsthand understanding of the watersheds, which allowed them to more completely understand how the Shared Strategy staff and contacts could best assist and support them through the recovery plan process. This constant interaction is a central example of the importance of staff work between the formal meetings—to provide information, collect feedback, test policy and operational ideas, identify concerns, and factor those concerns into policy and administrative plans and decisions.

If an issue was slated for Recovery Council action, months of discussion, testing, and refinement would precede it as the liaisons inquired about and considered watershed needs. In advance of potentially concerning or surprising developments, the liaisons would have phone calls and meetings with watershed representatives or Recovery Council members to prepare them. Although some relationships never fully developed, the atmosphere was one of growing trust and respect.

Each watershed faced a variety of unique challenges that the watershed liaisons had to address. These included natural geography, the degree of urbanization, planning capacity, local politics, the history of the issues, technical and other resources, and the number of jurisdictions involved. The following examples demonstrate the variation in watershed characteristics. (A more complete description of watershed characteristics can be found in the Watershed Profiles in Volume 1 of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan.)

- **Nooksack (WRIA 1):** Encompasses 830 square miles and more than 1,400 stream and river miles within northern and western Whatcom County and part of Skagit County. Major river is the Nooksack; major city is Bellingham. Population: 50,200. Significant agriculture. Participating tribes include the Nooksack.
- **Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound (WRIA 9):** Located within King County and including Tacoma and 15 smaller cities (including Auburn and Tukwila). Major rivers are the Green and Duwamish, which have been substantially altered due to development. Highly urbanized. Includes 92 miles of marine shoreline. Participating tribes include the Muckleshoot.
- **Dungeness (WRIA 18):** Located within Clallam County and encompassing 172,000 acres, 546 stream and river miles, and 33 shoreline miles. Major river is the Dungeness and its main tributary, the Gray Wolf. Participating tribes include the Makah and Jamestown S’Klallam.

Many participants commented that the watershed liaisons provided local groups with a clear channel of communication in the form of one designated person and showed watershed groups that they could adequately represent their interests to other Shared Strategy governance groups.

The watershed liaison role also supported a feedback loop between the watersheds and the regional Shared Strategy. This was especially important before the watersheds had full representation on the Recovery Council (only two were represented on the Development Committee) and before the watershed leads thus became a part of the governance and operational oversight mechanism. Through most of the planning period, the watershed liaisons were the primary mechanism for sharing regional policy and science guidance with the watersheds and reporting back on how watersheds were using the guidance, as well as other problems and issues. The liaisons, along with the two watershed representatives on the

Development Committee, became the channel for key issues from the watershed level to get to the Development Committee.

The importance of this feedback loop was evident when the first round of technical guidance for recovery planning was released by the TRT and the watershed groups found it to be inaccessible to non-scientists and not in tune with the political realities of local planning processes. Many watersheds communicated their concerns to the watershed liaisons, leading to feedback to the TRT that resulted in revised technical guidance.

The importance of the watershed liaison role cannot be overstated. This function was crucial to implementing a grassroots planning process in response to a regional problem. It brought in technical and policy information, helped local leaders understand the process and overcome misconceptions, brought information and issues upward for resolution, and identified contradictions or misunderstandings in policy—all crucial factors in gaining a reasonably consistent process and product at the local level. The watershed liaisons helped the watershed leads to deal with local issues, bringing experience from other watersheds that had dealt with those same issues and providing input from Kramer and other senior leaders.

The selling point at Port Ludlow was local control with beneficial central coordination, leading to an outcome that would make a difference and that NOAA would accept. The watershed liaison role was developed by those who held the position and Kramer to respect local control and offer worthwhile assistance. This allowed the Shared Strategy to influence the timing and quality of the local plans by improving the capacity of local leaders. The liaisons performed this work with distinction and with very limited resources.

The liaisons took into account the differences among the watersheds in experience and capacity. For example, with watersheds that had done significant planning before the Shared Strategy, the liaison had to focus on how to reconcile the existing effort with the regional effort without impeding the momentum. Watersheds that were newer to watershed planning needed help building capacity, recruiting members from unrepresented communities, and identifying technical resources or funding sources.

Kramer included watershed liaisons in the strategic planning at the Shared Strategy headquarters. As a result, local considerations were integrated into the regional planning and were central to virtually every decision.

Communications Director/Associate Director

The Communications Director position was created when the nonprofit entity was first formed, to help broaden support for salmon recovery and build a salmon recovery community across the Puget Sound region. Mark Glyde briefly held the position. During his tenure, he was responsible for initiating positive relationships with the media and broadening the public's awareness of the plight of Puget Sound salmon. He worked with Jim Kramer and the staff to develop the communications and outreach strategy for the first Salmon Summit.

The position evolved into the Associate Director position after Glyde left. It had become clear that just as the watershed liaisons were needed at the local level, Jim Kramer needed someone to help build relationships at the regional level to connect watershed-based planning with ESU needs. Jagoda Perich-Anderson was hired as the first associate director and remained in the position until 2006, and was succeeded by Millie Judge. This roughly coincides with the transition from plan development to implementation work.

Over the life of the Shared Strategy, this position evolved to include strategic planning and analysis, meeting/conference design and facilitation, project management, and administrative aspects of the organization's daily operations. Perich-Anderson had been involved in statewide salmon recovery processes as an environmental consultant and facilitator. She had facilitated statewide lead entity strategy development meetings and was the hired facilitator who worked early on with the Puget Sound TRT and Policy Work Group to help establish mechanisms for effective collaboration.

The associate director was the liaison to the Policy Work Group and facilitated the joint meetings of the Puget Sound TRT and the Policy Work Group during the period when local watershed plans were under scientific and policy review. The associate director also facilitated the H-integration leadership group and the adaptive management plan technical and policy group. Both of these groups were formed later in the process to advance aspects of recovery planning (H-integration and adaptive management) that had received less attention earlier in the process. Perich-Anderson also worked closely with Jim Kramer and Evergreen Funding Consultants on preparing for and facilitating the Recovery Council's finance strategy committee, which worked on financing options when the watershed plans were nearing completion.

Part of the success of the Shared Strategy's collaborative process involved staffing and facilitating numerous meetings and adjunct groups. The work of the associate director and the watershed liaisons in carrying out these communication, liaison, and facilitation functions were crucial and reflected thoughtful and well-planned work.

Executive Director

Jim Kramer, the executive director of the Shared Strategy, was an experienced local government leader who had managed a large agency in King County with environmental responsibilities, the Surface Water Management program. Following his tenure there, he had taken a fellowship year and then some unpaid time to learn about issues related to farming, fish, and watershed planning in the Puget Sound area, in anticipation of efforts to respond to the coming ESA listing. He helped to staff the Port Ludlow meetings, initially in an unpaid capacity. The knowledge and relationships he developed in this early period proved important to his understanding of how existing salmon recovery institutions and forces were constructed and how they interacted—or didn't.

Perhaps surprisingly to some, the gaps and unknown factors in the salmon recovery system, old arguments, and beneficial resources were not well known, at least on a Sound-wide basis. Some individuals and agencies had a grasp of one part of the "system." Some Sound-wide groups had a nuanced view of certain overall elements. For example, People for Puget Sound had a broad network of community leaders and activists in every community along the Sound and had many linkages to marine businesses and others; the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission had a well-developed network among tribes in the Puget Sound area and had access to much scientific information; and some watershed groups had developed strong systems of communication, policy making, data collection, and action within their communities; some officials and staff in the Tri-County work knew key variables and gaps, and many state and federal officials knew major issues within or near their official orbits. But few people and probably no institution had a fully integrated view of the regional players and relationships that would need to be part of an effective regional planning effort. Kramer, at the outset, did not have it either, but he was, even at this early stage, working to acquire a broad and deep view that would come to include a detailed knowledge and perception of institutions, behaviors, and relationships that could make or break system-wide or local decisions and behaviors. He used this micro level knowledge to form a sophisticated overview of the structures and practices that would be needed, and to form his own priorities for action once the Port Ludlow meetings produced an agreement for how to move ahead. Kramer never stopped learning or adding to his store of knowledge and translating that into the work of the Shared Strategy. This flexibility and willingness to apply the learning in real time allowed the structure and practices to bend and adjust in pursuit of the goals.

Even with his extensive preparation and his strong background, Kramer had much to learn in this vast web of jurisdictions, history, and traditions. But the information he gathered and the relationships he built during this period of preparation helped him enormously in constructing a comprehensive effort for salmon recovery planning in the Sound. Kramer remained executive director for the lifespan of the Shared Strategy.

Kramer's role as executive director was to turn the Port Ludlow agreements into a working system of grassroots governance and policy making that could produce an integrated and worthwhile salmon recovery plan that had wide regional support and support from NOAA. A large part of his role was to conceptualize how the system would work and to determine the needed resources, tools, and priorities. This required strategic thinking and the ability to adjust to new information and new challenges. Drawing on his own and Ruckelshaus' experience, and in consultation with the board of directors, Development Committee members, the Policy Work Group, and others, Kramer assembled the strategies, systems, and staff that would drive the organization toward plan completion.

A partial list of the functions of the executive director follows. It does not include all of the nuanced thinking and action required to motivate a large and varied constituency into action.

To the extent that Kramer had a job description for such an unprecedented task, he developed his priorities in response to evolving challenges.

- Determining how the Shared Strategy could influence the quality and consistency of watershed plans
- Building the needed credibility and trust to develop an effective plan
- Developing a plan and structure for organization and communication
- Integrating science into the goals and plan development in a way that would add value increase sophistication in planning and be accepted
- Ensuring the quality and consistency of the watershed plans through deployment of scientific resources, assistance, and expert review of documents
- Creating and seeking plans that were responsive to measurable goals, particularly in light of expected resistance to measurement
- Affecting the quality of planning by watersheds that were new to planning or lacked adequate resources
- Affecting the consistency and integration of plans formulated by watersheds that had already been active in salmon recovery, and trying to bring them into the process while preserving their strengths, motivation, and momentum
- Obtaining funds for the basic planning work and building a coalition and a program that would attract multiples of the existing funds for local and Sound-wide planning, habitat and other projects, and later implementation
- Creating a set of coordinated but independent local and regional decision-making, problem-solving, and implementation mechanisms and moving those towards a useful and flexible permanent existence that could coordinate and oversee recovery for the decades needed
- Structuring and building the capabilities of the Development Committee/Recovery Council and causing those to be central portions of a regional decision making and guidance mechanism
- Ensuring needed representation on the local councils (often by vetting and recruiting members)
- Creating alliances and trust with those who had authority and resources and with those who would produce and implement the plans
- Creating a shared sense of purpose among disparate interests, from the watershed level to state, tribal, and federal officials
- Determining how to use the Shared Strategy staff to make possible the actual planning and set the stage for implementation by the regional and local entities already established or those being established by the Shared Strategy effort
- Using science and an understanding of management and politics to keep the work focused on achieving meaningful results

- Assisting local planning councils or agencies when conflicts occurred that they were unable to address or that involved elected officials (especially newly elected ones or those concerned about the planning process)
- Coordinating with federal, state, and tribal governments with jurisdiction
- Overseeing interactions with elected and appointed officials over policy and budget
- Constantly causing the staff and others in the effort to learn from achievements, from errors and from new information, and to make the needed adjustments
- Looking ahead to implementation and it's needs, including financing, broader political and jurisdictional coalition needed for implementation

The operational details were delegated to the highly organized and efficient staff, who frequently exchanged information and ideas with Kramer. Kramer encouraged creativity and disciplined thinking, with a focus on developing an effective and acceptable plan by June 2005.

To keep staff focused on their core work, many tasks (including facilitation, conference logistics, examination of funding sources, and additional scientific assessments) were contracted out or taken on by volunteers. Although Kramer operated at the strategic level, he also tracked each watershed's progress throughout the recovery planning process, including reviewing drafts of the watershed plans. He also played an important role as a political strategist and advisor to watershed leaders and others in the broader political environment. Kramer and Ruckelshaus, in consultation with Development Committee, Policy Work Group, board of directors, a number of experienced mediators, and others set out to maximize the degree of voluntary action and agreement while attaining high scientific and policy standards and creating a sustainable and solid foundation for the effort.

He was the primary liaison to the Development Committee/Recovery Council, to the Policy Work Group, NOAA and TRT, and to state policy officials. This was a role that demanded significant foresight, creativity and integration of the concerns and potential influence of these agencies into a cohesive strategy for developing a plan that could lead to salmon recovery. He brought to this task his and others' knowledge, respect, and evaluation of the history of salmon recovery attempts, and the successes and shortcomings. Taking advantage of the experience, perception and relationships that Ruckelshaus brought, and providing Ruckelshaus with needed staff support for Federal and other interactions, as well as wisdom of others, Kramer creatively applied the widest variety of the tools that could be mustered. It is hard to exaggerate Kramer's positive impact and importance to what was achieved.

Because of Kramer's exposure across the watersheds and involvement with all of the senior policy officials, he brought useful lessons from one group to another as needed. He often worked with the local watershed council chairs (prominent and local citizens that chaired the local watershed councils) and leads (staff member usually employed by lead entity assigned to coordinate the work of watershed council and related local projects and tasks) to build alliances and political coalitions or overcome specific conflicts. At the watershed level, his contact

network helped bring most of the resistant or concerned watersheds on board and ensured that they completed a recovery plan. He interacted frequently with members of the Development Committee/Recovery Council. Maintaining this level of involvement required constant availability and responsiveness.

Most participants in the process praised Kramer's leadership and skillful management, and they noted that some of the most successful components of the Shared Strategy were made possible by the work of Kramer and his staff. Others complained that Kramer often seemed like the Shared Strategy "czar" and came across as heavy handed—or that he was not heavy-handed enough (see section on "criteria"). However, almost all of critics acknowledged that the mechanisms Kramer put in place and the related work of the staff were crucial to the resulting quality of the watershed plans and the possibility of the effort. In weighing the praise and criticism, it is probably reasonable to say that By most reasonable standards, Kramer did what had to be done and could be done with the time and resources available to build the capacity of local watershed groups, maintain leadership support, and draw fully on the talent and resources of Ruckelshaus and others. Kramer and other Shared Strategy leaders were clearly aware of the gaps in accomplishment relative to their hopes, and they identified many of the same shortcomings that the critics mentioned. Many of those who criticized Kramer initially for his forcefulness later acknowledged that his approach was necessary to attain the resulting degree of accomplishment.

Kramer had to simultaneously begin the planning, build the decision-making and coordination structure, engage local watersheds in a greater level of immediate restoration work, engage and energize those not yet involved in planning, bring those already involved into a regional effort, and build the credibility and influence of the formally non-authoritative entity he was running. Creating a system that could win widespread confidence would require local commitment to salmon recovery as well as to the plan itself. Leaders envisioned a bottom-up process with some top-down leadership in specific areas. Kramer understood that any top-down actions would require the confidence of all stakeholders. So, much of the effort, particularly at the beginning was focused on developing the value and credibility of the Shared Strategy staff and work. This could only be done by producing useful and respectful effort that would be an obvious break with the past and fulfill the collaborative and common effort that was foreseen in the Port Ludlow agreement, and which would show results that justified new levels of confidence in the system and in his and Ruckelshaus leadership.

The Shared Strategy Approach

Kramer summarized some key elements of the approach taken by the Shared Strategy:

1. Examining what was in place already and determining what to ask the watersheds and others to do that wasn't already being done or what needed to be done in a different or more coordinated way.

2. Setting a scientific standard to guide the watershed planning work by having the TRT set target population ranges for sustainable Chinook runs in Puget Sound.
 - a. The TRT developed models to determine the needed population levels for recovery. Because the needed population increases for Chinook were multiples of existing levels, Shared Strategy staff expected strong backlash and resistance. However, most watersheds and other participants took this as a given. The process for developing the numbers was widely respected, and the numbers were accepted and trusted by those in the planning process and the related governance structure.
 - b. The watershed groups used those targets in their planning, for the most part.
3. Having the watersheds evaluate actions across all the H's (habitat, hatchery, harvest, and hydro) to see what was necessary to achieve the targets.
4. At the Development Committee (regional) level, discussing funding strategies and how to gain support for the funding strategy. One fundamental component was commitment to the plan from each watershed and its major stakeholders.
5. Drawing local recovery plans together into the overall plan.

The Shared Strategy leadership sought a result that would benefit farms, the economy, fish, and the environment. They worked hard to recognize community and economic needs, ranging from ceremonial tribal fisheries to commercial fishing and farming, marine industries, and other ecosystem and economic interests. A major challenge was overcoming the image of enforcement (which had in earlier efforts angered the farm and forestry communities and created conflict) while at the same time making progress on environmental goals and establishing an ongoing planning and problem-solving infrastructure.

No one was sure that a coordinating entity without authority could be effective, but the nonprofit's lack of enforcement power helped bring key groups and people into the process. Early actions to support existing efforts and projects or to initiate new ones contributed to the confidence of locals in the regional effort. For example, through early restoration efforts, improvements were made in numerous culverts and road crossings, and in some areas, agreements were reached that allowed rivers to flood and take on natural processes that created habitat. In urban areas, efforts included removing and stopping the inflow of toxics to create a habitat refuge and improve water quality. Plans across the Sound sought to restore 10% to 50% of estuaries—a significant contribution to potential habitat restoration.

The Shared Strategy also took into account market forces and sought ways to support agriculture and help with production and sales as a way to foster a sustainable agriculture system.

Similar efforts were undertaken in forest stewardship, focusing on restoration for economic as well as environmental benefits. In land use, the Shared Strategy tried to encourage land conservancy, land banks, and other efforts to try to buy up and combine properties with the goal of restoring fish populations and sustaining local economies.⁸⁹

The Shared Strategy focused on planning for results that could be seen within 10 years. The Puget Sound Partnership,⁹⁰ while worrisome at this writing to some of the Shared Strategy participants, particularly in local watersheds, represents the follow-on implementation structure. It has a governance structure, has accountability requirements in terms of reporting to the governor and the state legislature, and has new funding.

Leadership at All Levels

A regional undertaking of this sort requires leadership at all levels, with a central means of coordination. This section examines the importance and contributions of leadership at these levels. Kramer and Ruckelshaus set out to strengthen the capacity of local leaders at every level and in each type of community because so much depended on local actions. Much of the impact on habitat, water quality, and other factors would depend on local land use decisions, so the commitment of local leaders—including those in the corporate, building, and farm communities—would be crucial.

This commitment was reflected in the representation of these communities on the Development Committee and the local watershed committees. The respect shown to tribes and tribal leaders by the Shared Strategy helped to bring many tribal leaders into key leadership positions in the local and regional governance structures.

The following sections examine some of these communities and their leadership.

Local Leadership

Significant leadership was needed at the front-line level in the watersheds. This role was generally assumed by watershed coordinators, community leaders, chairs of local planning councils (who were usually known leaders in the community), tribal leaders, farmers, or county council members—and often by a combination of such individuals. The leadership or similar support of a county council member, county executive, or tribal leader was usually important to the success of the lead entity or watershed coordinator, even though the tribal leader, council member or executive was only occasionally a member of the group.

⁸⁹ Jim Kramer. “Letter explaining nearshore planning work to date.” 2006.
<http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/e-bulletin/2004-11/2004-11-nearshore-letter.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Puget Sound Partnership Recommendations. “Sound Health, Sound Future: Protecting and Restoring Puget Sound.” December 2006.
http://www.psparchives.com/publications/about_us/psi_reports/final/final/PSP_FULLREPORT_FINAL.pdf.

The involvement of a particularly well-regarded farm community leader or tribal member often marked a turning point in the success of the watershed group because much of the effort beyond the technical work was in anticipating potential issues and dealing with those who felt threatened by the direction of the planning or project activities. This was not simply a matter of finding one good leader or chairperson for the local watershed—it required finding and encouraging leadership within the constituencies that would be part of the planning and implementation.

Finding interested and effective people at this level and supporting them were thus key functions of the Shared Strategy. This work included investing in the Watershed Leads group. The watershed leads had the responsibility to work on behalf of their watersheds, usually reporting to a county government, and they could learn from the challenges and successes of other watershed leads in their peer group. They were key local instruments and leaders to help others in the watershed have the information and confidence to step forward.

Combinations of local leadership and regional leadership were periodically used to encourage and engage local leaders from various constituencies or to deal with the concerns of newly elected officials or others at the county or watershed level who were unfamiliar with the salmon recovery activities in the watershed. Kramer, Ruckelshaus, and already-involved peers of the leaders in question often came out to local meetings to discuss the value of the process, hear concerns, and explain the overall regional arrangements and the degree to which the process had support from relevant quarters.

Personal and family relationships stemming from school or community activities also helped foster mutual respect and dialogue. Those with longstanding relationships could reach across the divide and have an informal conversation to find a basis for trust or progress, particularly at the local level. Those with deep roots in the community also tended to bring along others who were more reluctant. To their credit, Kramer and his staff made adjustments in process requirements and membership to promote greater inclusion. These long standing local relationships were encouraged and nurtured, in keeping with one of the key precepts of recognizing and respecting what had preceded Shared Strategy.

Regional Leadership

Ruckelshaus was the chair of the primary governing body, the Development Committee, which was later called the Recovery Council. This top-level policy group encompassed senior leaders of regulatory agencies, including NOAA and WDFW; tribes involved in co-management; environmental groups such as the Washington Environmental Council, American Rivers, and the Nature Conservancy; county officials; business, agriculture, and real estate interests; and others.

The Development Committee/Recovery Council membership was representative of the groups, governments, agencies, and jurisdictions that would otherwise be in a position to regulate, fund, implement, resist, sue, or in some other way affect the planning effort. The Shared Strategy

effort focused on bringing these interests together to share their knowledge and influence for the purpose of salmon recovery. If only a few of these groups had been represented, the effort would not have been widely supported. Ruckelshaus' presence as a statesman on environmental issues was a crucial ingredient but by itself would not have been enough without the involvement and confidence of these other parties.

Regulatory Agency Leadership

Because of their actual authority, agency leaders had to be involved, but they could not (for reasons discussed earlier) be the senior leaders of the effort or otherwise drive the strategy. They had to exercise leadership that kept their agency staff and actions in line with the process and contribute knowledge and resources without attempting to exert influence beyond their role as one of many constituents. In the end, they succeeded in this role, and these leaders, many with reputations for strong and aggressive leadership, played a low-key role and truly worked as participants and not as regulators.

The Shared Strategy was also careful to honor existing laws and agreements, especially tribal treaty rights. Changes in policies (such as later changes in the way the SRF Board allocated funds) would be addressed through a collaborative problem-solving and decision-making process—rather than as a precondition. This appears to have been helpful in earning and maintaining the trust of the existing authorities, including regulatory agencies and tribes.

The Shared Strategy immediately recognized that the leaders of regulatory agencies would have to be sufficiently comfortable with the direction taken that they or their staff would not be tempted to contradict it. They had to be part of the process, not outside waiting for results to react to. The Policy Work Group, which included senior agency staff but not agency directors or the senior officials, became the coordinating mechanism through which items that could affect the agencies were first tested and discussed.

The members of the Policy Work Group informed their principals as the process moved along. The members were knowledgeable about the views of their regulatory principals and the regulatory programs, and they played informal leadership roles within their agencies to keep them aligned with Shared Strategy priorities. The willingness of the senior leaders to allow this role is a testament to their commitment and their willingness to alter traditional roles and approaches.

Of special note are the efforts of Bob Lohn and the NOAA leadership. As the agency with the overall authority to impose a recovery plan, NOAA concluded that taking standard, prescribed steps would not yield a stable and effective result. Some disagree with NOAA's conclusion, but experience around the country appears to support NOAA's approach in Puget Sound and in other salmon recovery areas in Washington. Imposing a centrally prepared plan (such plans are said to be prepared by consultants in many parts of the country) could result in significant challenges or noncompliance, particularly given limited resources for enforcement. NOAA had

broad responsibility for resource recovery and took a significant risk in backing the Shared Strategy. Some in NOAA are said to have favored more standard tools, but Lohn exercised leadership in advocating a collaborative process.

Lohn was constantly available for Development Committee or Recovery Council meetings and for the Salmon Summits, as well as for many discussions with senior federal, tribal, and state officials. He was always responsive to Kramer and Ruckelshaus' requests for input and other assistance. Elizabeth Babcock of NOAA ably served as Lohn's alternative representative on the Policy Work Group, development committee and recovery council and otherwise liaison to the Shared Strategy effort. Donna Darm, NOAA deputy director, was instrumental in the early Port Ludlow work and at other times—particularly during Will Stelle's tenure and between Stelle's departure and Lohn's arrival, when she served as acting NOAA regional administrator.

Stelle had earlier demonstrated that NOAA was willing to take strong enforcement action. This approach, though controversial, gave credibility to Lohn's later admonishments that NOAA would take enforcement action if the Shared Strategy were to fall short of producing an acceptable regional plan. In conflict resolution, an external forcing event or threat is often necessary to cause people to sit down together and collaborate.⁹¹

Tribal Government Leadership

Tribes in Washington not only play a large on-the-ground role in what happens to fish, but they affect state and federal fishing policy and funding and are important players in issues related to water quality and environmental protection. They are active politically, have been potent in the courts regarding fishing issues, and have much experience in understanding and managing fisheries issues.

Because of sharp conflicts before and during the 1960s and 1970s, which led to co-management of fisheries (as described earlier) as well as more recent efforts in local watersheds, many tribes have worked with local farming, business, and other interests to save and restore habitat. These efforts have come about in most instances through mutual respect and commitment to the land and water. Examples can be found in such areas as the Nisqually River Basin,⁹² with the Nisqually Tribe taking a central role; the Nooksack Basin, with the Nooksack Tribe; Jefferson County, with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe; and Snohomish County, with the Tulalip.

The Shared Strategy, in examining these kinds of examples, recognized the crucial role of the tribes in these efforts, particularly those related to salmon fishing. Billy Frank, Jr., of the

⁹¹ The information in this section is largely informed by interviews with representatives from involved agency, Shared Strategy staff, and others closely involved in the planning effort.

⁹² White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. August 25, 2005. Nisqually River Watershed honored by Interior Secretary Norton for cooperative conservation partnership.

Nisqually Tribe was one of the initial sponsors of the Port Ludlow meetings, and the cooperation of Terry Williams of the Tulalip was also a key early demonstration of tribal leadership support. Later, David Troutt of the Nisqually served on the Policy Work Group, and many other tribal leaders became involved. In interviews, many of the tribal leaders and their staff said that working together and finding common interests leading to sustainable solutions was the only way to restore habitat and otherwise save the fish. These leaders repeatedly emphasized that relying on regulatory enforcement, lawsuits, and other traditional means had proved insufficient for making progress on salmon recovery and that new approaches were needed.

Certainly there was skepticism in this community, as in others, about the Shared Strategy's chances for success. But at the beginning, as noted, and then increasingly as time went on, tribal leaders participating in watershed groups and at the regional level brought important resources to the table in terms of scientific capacity, knowledge of legal requirements, workable techniques, political impact, and other areas. Tribal leaders such as Frank and Williams encouraged others to become involved regionally and locally and brought many of the staff and younger leaders into the process. These actions were risky, particularly because of the sovereignty of individual tribes.

The sovereignty of tribes as legal entities with a relationship to the federal government was a complication for tribal leaders in terms of becoming involved in a regional effort like Shared Strategy. Many tribes maintain that their only required governmental relationship is with the federal government, with whom they, as sovereign governments, have treaties. At the same time, an increasing number of tribes have developed some less formal interactions with state and local governments, although much mistrust remains.⁹³ Tribal leaders coming to the table meant overcoming historical resentments, conflicts, and other barriers. Ruckelshaus' longstanding credibility with many tribes and the trust Kramer developed in this areas encouraged an active, central, visible, and respected role for tribes and tribal leaders that chose to participate. But most of the credit goes to tribal leaders, who jumped into the planning process despite misgivings and past disappointments. While not all affected tribes joined in or did so enthusiastically, the importance of tribal involvement and tribal leadership in the Shared Strategy cannot be understated.

Board of Directors

As noted earlier, the legitimacy and transparency of the Shared Strategy nonprofit board was important to the credibility of the effort. This board, chaired for most its lifespan by Ralph Munro, a former Washington secretary of state, and including business and tribal leaders, provided a link to the business community and private funding and helped keep affected groups aware of the progress.

⁹³ The Centennial and Millennium Accords, previously cited, represent recent steps to establish formal, constructive problem solving and policy dialogue between Washington State and tribal governments.

This additional layer of leadership ensured the transparency of the finances and provided an additional legitimate source of policy advice and access to communities of interest and influence. Having this carefully structured fiduciary board as a meaningful part of the effort, rather than just appointing three friends of Ruckelshaus or Kramer, was both symbolically important and helped separate corporate governance from policy governance. However, it should be noted that policy decisions were not made here—as promised, they were made by the Development Committee/Recovery Council, which was broadly representative.

William D. Ruckelshaus

The majority of those interviewed for this report emphasized the importance of Ruckelshaus' leadership to the success and progress of the Shared Strategy. This was true of those who had direct interaction with him and as well as those who saw him more at a distance. Those who saw him up close had a more nuanced picture. Some of those with less direct connection to the regional planning activities had exaggerated assumptions about his role and powers, and many critics assumed that even under these complex conditions Ruckelshaus could have waved a wand or otherwise forced more progress. His national stature and influence were unmistakable, but it took the two Port Ludlow meetings, one year apart, as well as much difficult work in between, to create a workable structure. Even Ruckelshaus could only push people as far as their interests and responsibilities would allow.

Ruckelshaus was the founding Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the 1970s and is a well-known leader—known for commitment to the issues, but taking a balanced and fair approach to all interests—on environmental issues as well as in business—in addition to being famous for his resistance to the Nixon administration's order to fire the Watergate special prosecutor. He was a state legislator, state house majority leader, and deputy attorney general in Indiana earlier in his career, and later a corporate vice president and CEO in several U.S. companies. He worked as an attorney in high-profile law firms, and he answered the call to return to EPA during the Reagan administration, charged with restoring its reputation after some tarnishing by Administration appointees. With his background, reputation, experience, and well-honed abilities in complex circumstances, Ruckelshaus has significant access in government and in the business community, both regionally and nationally. The sum of these connections represented an extraordinary asset to salmon recovery planning. Probably no one else in the region had this combination of traits, and the scope of his contributions is hard to understate.

Ruckelshaus' contributions included gaining access to members of the Congressional delegation from Washington state, including Senator Patty Murray, Representative Norm Dicks, and Representative Jennifer Dunn—all of whom had significant influence on appropriations for salmon recovery efforts. His access to the White House Office of Environmental Quality and to other officials provided similar opportunities to discuss plans and results and make the case for funding. With a Democratic majority government and Congressional delegation his Republican ties were particularly important during the Bush Administration. Locally, unlike many who were

interested in salmon recovery, he was able to approach business leaders. Business support for the collaborative planning approach and funding was crucial to making some of the major meetings happen and avoiding potential later concerns. Ruckelshaus also had personal contacts and an iconic reputation among environmental groups. However, he had not been significantly involved in local government issues in Washington state, and he was not well known to the agricultural community.

By virtue of his environmental positions and involvement in environmental issues, including his position as a special envoy to the negotiations on the Pacific Salmon Treaty between the U.S. and Canada,⁹⁴ where he assisted in getting administration attention focused at the needed levels—he was familiar with the interaction of federal and state environmental laws and the politics of such enforcement and policy making. He had worked with a number of Northwest tribes during the U.S.-Canada treaty negotiations, as well as in a number of other circumstances, where he had won their trust.

A leader of Ruckelshaus' caliber, and with his degree of experience, contacts, and knowledge, would be necessary to gain the confidence of Governor Locke and NOAA Regional Director Bob Lohn in the unproven and largely unprecedented volunteer effort.

It may seem ironic that among Ruckelshaus' attributes, few were mentioned as often as his humility. He demonstrated a genuine interest in problem solving with everyone's interests in mind⁹⁵—particularly the interests of those who didn't know him, such as those in the farm community or those who did not know or who were less inclined to be impressed with his national reputation.

He also had a vision of bringing all parties and players into a voluntary system that would not rely primarily on regulation and mandates and would not seek to impose a policy solution or outcome. He had in mind principles of bringing good science to bear—given his familiarity with clashes of science and policy over years of environmental problem solving and regulatory development—but ensuring that policy wasn't made by scientists, and that policy makers could not ignore science. He had in mind the need to develop a broad coalition that would create unity of purpose and related coordination, respect, and political support that would outlast the planning process. He was also committed to a solution that relied on individual watersheds and that recognized the power of people working to preserve an area, economy, and culture in which they lived and worked.

⁹⁴The Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America. Treaty Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America Concerning the Pacific Salmon. November 15, 2006. www.psc.org/pubs/treaty.pdf.

⁹⁵ The interview results are quite consistent in this regard.

Ruckelshaus frequently spoke of his philosophy that people who live in a place, who care about the community, and who may naturally have particular interests are in the best position to find sustainable solutions that they are willing to commit to. He also saw science as a key part of establishing an overall set of goals and assessing individual watershed plans. This use of science would set a standard that precluded least-common-denominator political solutions. Ruckelshaus' other traits include his ability to help foster high-quality interactions and help people better understand one another. This ability was evident as he (and Kramer) helped farm, tribal, and local government leaders work through difficult issues.

Although Kramer came to embody and add to the effectiveness and depth of these approaches, Ruckelshaus served as a moral force and voice of broad experience who could prevail on reluctant leaders and gain the trust of groups as diverse as the tribes, agricultural interests, environmental groups and the business community. Kramer was a sophisticated and dedicated manager of day-to-day operations, a long-run thinker about operations as well as an effective strategist on these broader policy and political elements. Elsewhere, a different combination of people or a larger leadership team might be required.

Shared Strategy Financing

The Shared Strategy planning process and related restoration and recovery projects was financed through a variety of private and public sources. Other than a modest budget for the small central staff and related coordination and strategic planning for the overall process, much of the funding was directly attributable to the efforts and focus of Ruckelshaus, Kramer, Lohn, and others, as well as to the increased commitment of the state, counties, and tribes, including redirection of some existing resources. The Shared Strategy nonprofit organization did not receive or distribute this funding—nor did it seek to—other than the small operations budget for its coordination and outreach work. Although part of its priorities was to help gain increased and redirected funding, it did not want to be a competitor for funds or seen as a conduit. This work was left up to the SRF Board and to other already existing channels for funds flow. This approach is part of why it is difficult to trace specific funding flows because it came from so many sources, with no central reporting system. This section will describe the variety of sources and uses of major funding. Much of the funding was directly attributable to the efforts and focus of Ruckelshaus, Kramer, Lohn, and others, and as well as to the increased commitment of the state, counties, and tribes as the process continued. The breadth of the coalition created a favorable climate for increasingly large funding requests to federal and state sources.

The following sections describe some of the main identifiable funding sources.⁹⁶ Although major efforts were made to increase funding for recovery, since Shared Strategy did not control or

⁹⁶ The report's authors received valuable input from Dennis Canty of Evergreen Funding Consultants, who assisted the Shared Strategy entities in assessing potential funding sources, and others from the staff and

distribute the funds, there was no central accounting done that there. Nor could the study team find an alternative source that could be considered reliable. Adding to the difficulty, the federal, state, local and tribal portions of funding are all kept separately and under separate systems of accounting. Hence, in the preparation of this report, the study team made an attempt for the record to identify the main elements and sources. This accounting relies on memory of participants close to the financing issues and review of a sample of salient budgets. It should not be relied on for precise estimates of any kind. Nevertheless, it illustrates the scale and sources, which are revealing despite the limitations in the presentation.

Federal Funding

Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) was established by Congress in 2000 in response to the ESA listing of West Coast salmon and steelhead populations.⁹⁷ The goal of PCSRF is to restore stocks of Pacific salmon through improvement and recovery of salmon habitat.⁹⁸ Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Alaska, and the Pacific Coastal and Columbia River tribes receive Congressional PCSRF appropriations from NOAA Fisheries each year. Each state has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that establishes criteria and processes for funding priority of PCSRF projects.⁹⁹ Washington's MOU was agreed upon by NOAA Fisheries and by the SRF Board, acting by and through the State of Washington's Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC).¹⁰⁰

from state and federal agencies. We are grateful for the assistance of these individuals in identifying areas of funding for the Shared Strategy, and we take responsibility for any inconsistencies or errors in identifying sources and ranges of funds. It is difficult to compare and related other funding sources because they come from different funding sources, many of which account for funding in different formats

⁹⁷ NOAA. Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund: http://webapps.nwfsc.noaa.gov/portal/page?_pageid=34,45747&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL. Accessed March 1, 2006.

⁹⁸ Expectmore.gov; Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, program assessment. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/summary/10000042.2006.html>.

⁹⁹ NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Regional Office. Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Recovery-Planning/PCSRF/Index.cfm>.

¹⁰⁰ MOU between NMFS and the SRF Board, Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation Office on the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. June 2005.

PCSRF brought a significant amount of funding to Puget Sound salmon recovery—a total of \$572,358,619 from 2000 to 2007, 32% of which was appropriated to Washington state (through the SRF Board).¹⁰¹

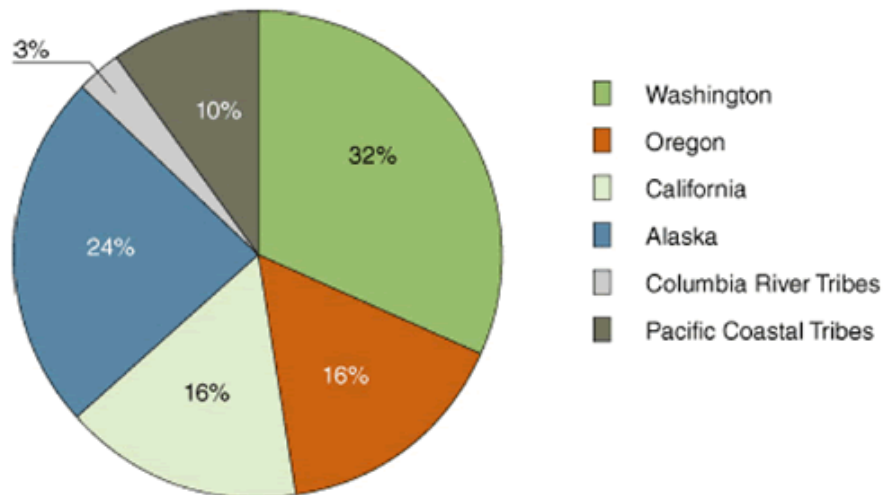


Exhibit 1-1: Percent of PCSRF Appropriations by State and Tribe

The strong support of local leaders and Congressional representatives was critical to securing significant federal funding. The allocation of PCSRF funds also sent a signal to local watersheds and tribes that the effort was well-funded, significant, and could benefit them.

The allocation process for PCSRF funds has changed over time to ensure that funded projects are held accountable and are achieving intended goals. In 2006, PCSRF responded to Congressional and OMB direction and worked with NOAA Fisheries to define performance indicators to measure progress toward the following PCSRF goals:¹⁰²

- Enhance the availability and quality of salmon and steelhead habitat
- Improve the status of ESA listed salmon and steelhead
- Address habitat limiting factors for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead

¹⁰¹ NOAA. Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund.

http://webapps.nwfsc.noaa.gov/portal/page?_pageid=34,39861&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.

¹⁰² Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. December 2006. Performance Goals, Measures and Reporting Framework. <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Recovery-Planning/PCSRF/upload/PCSRF-Perf-Framework.pdf>.

- Improve management practices to maintain healthy salmon populations and prevent decline of ESA-listed salmon
- Ensure overall sustainability of naturally-spawning Pacific salmon and steelhead

The performance measurement framework recognizes that it is possible to use many indicators to represent inputs (e.g., funding, in-kind contributions), outputs (e.g., number of projects, acres improved), outcomes (e.g., fish populations), and efficiency (e.g., project timing and funding priorities). The framework represents a significant evolution in the way that salmon recovery resources are allocated at the local, regional, and state level. Local Puget Sound salmon recovery leaders, such as Ruckelshaus, advocated for more accountability and focus in allocating PCSRF funds through the SRF Board.

State Funding

Washington state has contributed to the salmon recovery effort in several ways, including via the SRF Board (which also distributes federal funds), Interior Washington salmon grants, WDFW, and the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office.

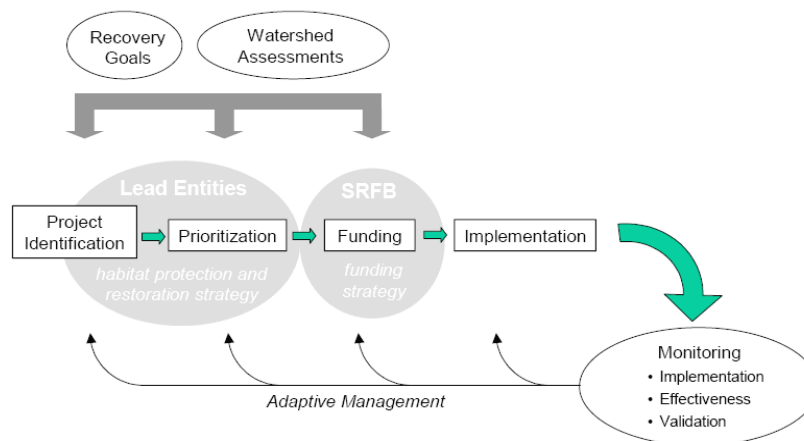
SALMON RECOVERY FUNDING BOARD (SRF Board)

As detailed earlier in the report, the SRF Board was established in July 1999 by the state legislature to help oversee and administer the investment of state and federal funds to protect and restore salmon habitat.¹⁰³ The board's mission is to support salmon recovery by funding habitat protection and restoration projects and related programs and activities that produce sustainable and measurable benefits for fish and their habitat.¹⁰⁴ The SRF Board became an increasingly helpful and strategic partner in the salmon recovery funding process, establishing a transparent decision making process that increasingly reflected science input and strategic goals, and later regional priorities. It merits examination and emulation, particularly because it has evolved so usefully since its early establishment. The chart below illustrates how the SRF Board funds salmon recovery efforts.

¹⁰³ The Salmon Recovery Funding Act of 1999 (RCW 77.85, 2ESSSB 5595).

¹⁰⁴ SRFB Mission, Roles and Responsibilities, and Funding Strategy. Adopted by the SRFB on June 15, 2001 and amended on September 7, 2001.

Funding Salmon Habitat Projects



The SRF Board is staffed and administered through the state's Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), which has been renamed the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).¹⁰⁵ As it happens, this is an agency that has developed a reputation for policy neutrality and serving conservation goals in a constructive and non-partisan, non-advocacy manner. The IAC/RCO distributes funds through written sub-agreements with funded applicants, and it supplements federal funding with a minimum of 25% in non-federal matching funds.¹⁰⁶ From 1999 to 2007, the SRF Board allocated more than \$171 million in state and federal funds to finance more than 730 projects in the state of Washington.¹⁰⁷ Washington has been receiving an estimated \$25 million per year from PCSRF that is allocated to the SRF Board.¹⁰⁸ From 2006 to 2007, 45% of total SRF Board funds were allocated to the Puget Sound region.¹⁰⁹ An estimated \$20 million to \$25 million was contributed to the SRF Board annually from the federal government, with the state contributing about \$6 million to \$12 million annually.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Washington State House Bill (HB) 1813, 2008.

¹⁰⁶ MOU between NMFS and the SRF Board, Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation Office on the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. June 2005.

¹⁰⁷ SRF Board. 2007 Salmon Recovery Grant Funding Report. December 3, 2007.
http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/srfb/8th_Round/Funding_Report_Final_Draft.pdf
http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/srfb/8th_Round/Funding_Report_Final_Draft.pdf.

¹⁰⁸ Lohn and Canty interviews.

¹⁰⁹ SRF Board. 2007 Salmon Recovery Grant Funding Report. December 3, 2007.
http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/srfb/8th_Round/Funding_Report_Final_Draft.pdf
http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/srfb/8th_Round/Funding_Report_Final_Draft.pdf.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Dennis Canty. Evergreen Funding Consultants.

The SRF Board approach has shifted from a statewide, competitive granting approach to targeted allocations for regional salmon recovery areas—to better address policy issues and to develop more integrated policy in conjunction with the salmon recovery plans in Washington, including the regional plan produced by the Shared Strategy process.¹¹¹

The SRF Board recognizes that success in achieving its mission requires important partnerships with the legislature, governor, state and federal agencies, tribes, and local communities. The RCW 77.85 legislation sets forth the board's relationship with local communities through the creation of watershed-based lead entity organizations. Lead entities are voluntary local agencies, citizen committees, technical advisory groups, and lead agencies that represent one or more watersheds (WRIAs) and submit lists of projects to the SRF Board for funding.¹¹²

The board carries out its mission by funding habitat projects recommended by lead entities that protect, preserve, restore, and enhance salmon habitat and watershed functions. Three aspects of the SRF Board's overall strategy to support salmon recovery are important to highlight:¹¹³

- **A comprehensive approach.** The SRF Board aims to have a comprehensive understanding of other efforts, activities, and programs integral to salmon recovery (such as harvest and hatchery practices, hydropower operations, water quality issues, setting of in-stream flows, watershed planning unit activities, governance issues, and Northwest Power Planning Council programs). It also aims to base its decisions on science and measurable outcomes, and it integrates public participation into all actions and programs.
- **Recovery goals.** The board asserts that an effective statewide salmon recovery effort requires specific goals that define the abundance, productivity, and diversity of fish populations and the health of riverine and marine waters. Achieving these goals requires assessment of current conditions, a strategy to achieve the goals, and monitoring to assess whether the effort is effective. Finally, a funding strategy is required to ensure that the recovery goals can be met.
- **Science-based decisions.** Successful salmon recovery requires that decisions and actions be guided by the best available science at all levels—including individual streams, watersheds, and recovery regions—as well as statewide.

¹¹¹ SRF Board. 2007 Salmon Recovery Grant Funding Report. December 3, 2007. http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/srfb/8th_Round/Funding_Report_Final_Draft.pdfhttp://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/srfb/8th_Round/Funding_Report_Final_Draft.pdf.

¹¹² SRF Board. Mission, Roles and Responsibilities, and Funding Strategy. Adopted by the SRF Board on June 15, 2001, and amended on September 7, 2001.

¹¹³ SRF Board. Mission, Roles and Responsibilities, and Funding Strategy. Adopted by the SRF Board on June 15, 2001, and amended on September 7, 2001.

The lead entity and the SRF Board also seek to give priority to the most important habitat protection and restoration projects as identified within each watershed. The lead entity making the request is obliged to prioritize local requests, preserving local decision making, but subjecting the request to statewide standards and oversight, including additional science review.

SRF Board membership. The SRF Board membership incorporates the experiences and viewpoints of citizens and the major state natural resource agencies. The board's six members are appointed by the governor and five state agency directors.

The January 2001 membership included:¹¹⁴

- William Ruckelshaus, Seattle, Chair
- Frank "Larry" Cassidy, Vancouver
- Brenda McMurray, Yakima
- John Rosekelley, Spokane
- James Peters, Olympia
- Conservation Commission Director
- Department of Ecology Director
- Department of Fish and Wildlife Director
- Department of Natural Resources Director
- Department of Transportation Director

In 2007, the members included:¹¹⁵

- William Ruckelshaus, Seattle, Chair
- Frank "Larry" Cassidy, Vancouver
- Joe Ryan, Seattle (Washington Environmental Council)
- Steve Tharinger, Clallam County
- David Troutt, Nisqually River Council
- Conservation Commission Director
- Department of Ecology Director
- Department of Fish and Wildlife Director
- Department of Natural Resources Director
- Department of Transportation Director

¹¹⁴ SRF Board. Jan 29, 2001. Press release: "Salmon Recovery Funding Board grants nearly \$32 million for salmon recovery projects."

http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/srfb/2nd_Rnd/Press_Release_2nd_Rnd.pdf.

¹¹⁵ SRF Board. SRFB Fact Sheet 2007.

Interior Washington Salmon Grants

About \$5 million to \$10 million in funding came to the Shared Strategy through Interior Washington salmon grants, mostly grants to watersheds. The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office provided about \$1.5 million through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). WWRP provides funding for parks, water access sites, trails, wildlife habitat, and farmland preservation.¹¹⁶

State Agencies

Several state agencies contributed in-kind and directly to the Puget Sound salmon recovery effort through the Shared Strategy.

- Washington State Department of Ecology received money primarily for water quality enhancement through the Watershed Planning Act (ESHB 2514), but in some instances salmon recovery work benefited financially from this legislation. Although it is difficult to determine the exact amount allocated toward salmon recovery, it is estimated to be about \$200,000 annually.
- WDFW contributed the equivalent of \$800,000 annually in staff and funding to the Puget Sound salmon recovery effort. WDFW's major contribution was providing part-time liaisons in each watershed who for some proportion of their time provided support for lead entities (equivalent to 6 to 8 FTEs annually).¹¹⁷
- The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office was established by the state legislature through the Salmon Recovery Planning Act (ESHB 2496) to coordinate statewide salmon recovery efforts.¹¹⁸ About \$200,000 was contributed to Puget Sound-specific salmon recovery work (about 2 FTEs annually). This office was a strong supporter and effective cooperator with the Shared Strategy (as well as other Washington salmon recovery areas).

Tribal Funding

The tribes' primary financial contribution to the Shared Strategy effort came by way of staff time dedicated to salmon recovery policy and science. Individual tribes that were active had about 3 FTEs (about \$300,000) working on Puget Sound salmon recovery related to the Shared Strategy effort each year. Further, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission had 1½ FTEs working on

¹¹⁶ Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program website. <http://www.rco.wa.gov/rcfb/grants/wwrp.htm>.

¹¹⁷ Not all of these funds emerged from the Shared Strategy effort or were coordinated with it. Fully separating the motivation and use of such funds is not possible. It is fair to say that, although some of this would have been appropriated and spent in the absence of the Shared Strategy, the magnitude, continuation, prioritization, and coordination would otherwise have been less.

¹¹⁸ Governor's Salmon Recovery Office. <http://www.governor.wa.gov/gsro/about/default.asp>.

the project per year (about \$150,000). Additional funding was obtained by tribal leaders from PCSRF and individual tribes, but the amounts are not easy to separate and identify.

Local Funding

A significant amount of direct and in-kind resources was devoted to the Shared Strategy effort from local (city and county) governments. About \$18 million to \$20 million per year was devoted to the Shared Strategy effort at the local level. Revenue for local action was typically generated through current expenses, storm water utilities, and/or wastewater utilities. Generally, local funds supported local restoration projects and staff time.

The level of financial support at the local level varied drastically from place to place due to the availability of funds and the relative wealth of the community. In fact, 80% to 90% of the total local spending on salmon recovery has been in the Tri-Counties (Snohomish, King, and Pierce Counties). The availability of funds at the local level to support salmon recovery efforts depends on the tax base of the local government, which is greatly affected by assessed value and property taxes.

The Shared Strategy provided resources for local governments to engage in financial planning. For example, a guide called *A Primer on Habitat Project Costs* was developed for watershed leaders involved in the Shared Strategy by Evergreen Funding Consultants. The primer was the result of dozens of interviews with habitat restoration experts in the Puget Sound region.¹¹⁹ It was intended to help watershed leaders estimate the costs of habitat projects within their watersheds as they completed the salmon restoration plans. The primer offers simple techniques to calculate and fine-tune project cost estimates. It also helped ensure that watersheds would think about costs throughout the planning stages.¹²⁰

Private Funding

Several private Washington-based businesses and environmental foundations contributed to the Shared Strategy effort. Private funding was critical to getting the project off the ground. Before the formal organization of the nonprofit entity and the Port Ludlow II meeting, funding for the Shared Strategy was provided solely by Washington-based businesses and environmental foundations. Throughout the Shared Strategy effort, environmental foundations (such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) provided funding for events, the nonprofit organization's operating budget, and local salmon recovery efforts. This amount for the coordinating activities overseen by Kramer was in the \$400,000 to \$700,000 range annually and helped finance staff

¹¹⁹ Jim Kramer. Cover letter for *A Primer on Habitat Project Costs*. Spring 2003.
http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/files/PrimeronHabitatProjectCosts_wLetter.pdf.

¹²⁰ Evergreen Funding Consultants. Spring 2003. *A Primer on Habitat Project Costs*.
http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/files/PrimeronHabitatProjectCosts_wLetter.pdf.

work, some of the consultants, and events such as the Salmon Summits. Some contributions also came from local nonprofits and foundations and from special districts with missions related to salmon recovery.

Assessing the Shared Strategy

This section will address the assessment questions posed at the outset of this report:

- Has the Shared Strategy increased the capacity of the Puget Sound region to effectively work toward salmon recovery?
- If so, what lessons or ideas can be drawn from the Shared Strategy effort that would be of help in addressing other resource management issues or conflicts?

Increased Capacity

The capacity of the Puget Sound region to work toward salmon recovery is certainly greater than before the work of the Shared Strategy process. We'll examine the structures and mechanisms that have contributed to this increased capacity.

Watershed Planning Groups

Each of the 14 watersheds has a watershed planning group with a plan in place. Despite some valid criticisms concerning the relative completeness of some of the watershed plans, most critics agree that the plans are better, the groups stronger, funding and other prospects greater than they would have been otherwise.

- All 14 plans include science-based goals and went through both a science review and a policy review that resulted in revisions and, often, important learning and upgrade in recognition and commitment regarding key actions and goals.
- The local groups have broader representation and acceptance in their local areas, at least partly due to the regional leadership and focus, and also due to the resources that flowed as a result of the overall unified regional effort. For example, strong farm representation in many areas came about through efforts of the Shared Strategy leadership, including members of the Development Committee/Recovery Council.¹²¹ Much of the local awareness and publicity came from efforts initiated by Shared Strategy staff.
- Resistance by some local elected officials to their local planning group's involvement in salmon recovery planning has been largely ameliorated. This was due to personal

efforts by the Shared Strategy leadership as well as to the ongoing successes of the Shared Strategy and follow on work.

- Most local watershed groups involved in salmon recovery planning have far stronger and more positive working relationships with state and local agencies and programs, including regular and productive involvement by the local representatives of DOE, DFW, DNR, and major land-owning and resource managing federal agencies such as the National Park Service; and significant tribal staff and leadership presence.
- The potential for targeted and coordinated local projects is far greater, as it is for local projects to have a more useful regional impact. This is evidenced by the local prioritizing forced by the SRF Board funding process, and by the ability to coordinate through the Watershed Leads Group and the Recovery Council. As another example, the purchasing of land and easements and other previously less coordinated activities are now more focused on protecting habitat, altering land use patterns, and addressing economic impact on the community.
- The local watershed groups' capacity for further planning and implementation is also enhanced by the monthly Watershed Leads meetings and by representation on the Recovery Council.
- The collaboration and buy-in of the watershed planning groups helped, along with Recovery Council membership and actions, to build confidence among elected officials and other policy makers who were in a position to make funding commitments.
- Some watersheds that already had significant efforts underway, such as Nisqually and Hood Canal, benefited from and contributed to regional capacity and coordination and offered greater access to scientific expertise. In the case of Nisqually, which was reported to initially have had an "all we need is your checkbook" response to overtures by the Shared Strategy, became actively involved.
- All watersheds benefited from the greater funding and policy attention that the Shared Strategy generated.
- The strengthened local groups became a mechanism for interpreting and carrying out a federal mandate and the regional policy response in a way that would align with local circumstances and preferences and generate enthusiasm and an infrastructure for salmon recovery effort at the local level.

Remaining challenges include the fact that not everyone in the community who could affect it is devoted to salmon recovery, despite far broader and deeper support than before and, arguably, far greater community support than is typical for most state or regional policy efforts. Some plans were deemed less complete than others by NOAA and require further attention. Challenges like climate change and others have yet to be fully dealt with, but there is a mechanism in place (PSP) to assist and encourage improvement and incorporation of new challenges. Such mechanisms, commitments, and relationships did not previously exist except in a few watersheds (like Nisqually), and few, if any, of the connections among watersheds

existed. Additionally, few had the range of local involvement by state and federal agencies that is now relatively common.

Watershed Leads Implementation Group

The Watershed Leads Implementation Group was created by the Shared Strategy. As the emphasis has moved to implementation, this council has become a valuable forum for information sharing, policy discussions, policy testing, and collaboration among those dealing with implementation of the recovery plans at the local level. As one example, this group proposed an accountability system to evaluate how each watershed is doing and how well the system is supporting and executing the recovery plans. (See the earlier discussion of the voluntary “report card.”) The follow-on PSP mechanism has been able to implement a greater accountability system, partly as a result of its mandate, but largely because of the common recognition of the need for coordination and measurement nurtured by the interactions and informal regional education on science, resource management and politics during the Shared Strategy process.

This forum, with representation of all 14 watershed planning groups, is where regional goals and needs can be balanced with local realities and where issues encountered at the front-line implementation level can surface and be discussed in a systematic way. Rather than trying to separately fund and activate a lobbying campaign, the 14 watersheds can use its formal relationship to the Recovery Council and its highly visible regional membership to try and affect policy in favor of more effective recovery efforts. Perhaps more fundamentally, it is a practical forum for sharing lessons and difficult problems, and to share local successes and impact of intended regional policies on local efforts. Previously, local watersheds were on their own. Although it was not part of the original plan for governance, the Watershed Leads group became a major force in the development of a collaborative strategy for salmon recovery and for coordination and sharing of problems and issues. In many ways, this group has been the fulcrum of the regional/local or top-down, bottom-up effort.

The new Puget Sound Partnership, which has an expanded mandate for Puget Sound cleanup but encompasses the salmon recovery planning, includes some new infrastructure reflecting this broader mission, and new staff in place of the Shared Strategy regional staff. The transition was just getting started as of late 2007 and early 2008 and progressed through year end when the PSP Action Agenda was submitted.

There is now an overall governance structure and agency, established by state law setting up the Puget Sound Partnership, above the Recovery Council, known as the Leadership Council. The watershed planning groups and the Watershed Leads Group have been asked to provide new information and to fit into the new overall planning structure, which led initially to some inevitable interruptions and uncertainty. Most of those previously involved with the Shared Strategy are cautiously optimistic that these issues are only temporary and that the new procedures and structures will be sufficiently consistent with and respectful of what was built

under the Shared Strategy, and add new strengths and possibilities. It is the intention of those leading the PSP to maintain continuity of the watershed plans and implementation.

Development Committee/Recovery Council

As described earlier, the Development Committee/Recovery Council was established to bring together senior leaders from tribes, state agencies, the federal government, counties, and cities, as well as representatives from agriculture, environmental groups, business, real estate, and others. It was meant to be a forum for working on the difficult issues and politics affecting salmon recovery, developing policies to guide the planning, overseeing the quality of the planning, approving the regional plan for submission to NOAA, and providing support to the local watersheds and the members' own constituencies.

While a high-level, representative committee of this sort is not uncommon in addressing natural resource conflicts, no such council was in place before the ESA listing and the agreement to establish the Shared Strategy regional planning effort. The authority to form this group came from the Port Ludlow accord, and Ruckelshaus had the authority, as chair, to create it.

Because of the careful work in forming and working with this group by Ruckelshaus, Kramer, Frank, and the Shared Strategy staff, and later, Bob Lohn as well as others, the group was able to deal with highly sophisticated and complex issues of policy, politics, representation, and funding.

- It developed a coordinated funding strategy, which resulted in a \$40 million annual commitment from the state and helped to gain millions in additional federal funds. Probably, it took a high-level group of this type, unified on policy, to be persuasive in these financial dimensions. Without the decision making and problem solving structure, and an agreed and accepted plan, this level of resources would have been far less likely, if even possible.
- It oversaw and sponsored the development of a regional strategy based on centrally-prescribed, scientifically-based recovery goals, and it sponsored the development of plans that went beyond what most of the local planning groups could have produced on their own, as well as coordination, however imperfect of the local plans to reflect regional and ESU need. As the implementation phase, goes forward through the PSP, and as more is learned about issues such as climate change and population pressures, it will take a high-stature, well-informed group of this sort to face those challenges.
- Although the watershed groups are the engine of the recovery planning and implementation effort, the Recovery Council provides important regional leadership, coordination and perspective, and maintains state and federal support, among other tasks, including the continued pressure to deal with local land use and other difficult-to-coordinate policies.

- Now that the watersheds are more fully represented on the Recovery Council, an even more complete discussion of issues can take place.

Remaining challenges include the following:

- Because of the umbrella PSP organization, the Recovery Council will have one more layer to go through to affect state or federal policy or funding.
- Implementation is different from planning, although some planning revisions will take place. The implementation phase may entail greater political risks for the Recovery Council as its members press local jurisdictions and others at the local level to take the actions needed to further protect water quality and habitat—including more stringent and coordinated land use policies.
- The same PSP transition issues that affect the Watershed Leads and the watersheds will affect this group as well.

TRT and Policy Work Group

Although no longer in place in their initial forms, these groups affiliated with the Shared Strategy at the regional level created important capacity.

The TRT's application of science to the recovery planning goals and plan development was crucial to the possibility of relevant and effective plans, raising the quality of the plans and their linkages for affecting the ESU, and gaining credibility in many quarters. The TRT's direct technical assistance brought a regional scientific view and a set of well-qualified scientists to the planning effort. The acceptance of a centralized science function for goal setting, assessment, advising, and measurement was a breakthrough, as was the more interactive work that better infused science into the policy, and gave the scientists a better feel for how to get more science into the policy-making.

The Policy Work Group built on and advanced the impact of the coordinating functions pioneered by the Puget Sound Action Team and the GSRO. It brought the state, federal, tribal, and local regulators into ongoing, constructive contact and created a way for them to carry out their mission without behaving in traditional regulatory ways—ways that their leadership and senior staff found more effective and productive.

The Policy Work Group was a key link between existing authorities and the emerging coordinating and policy authority of the Shared Strategy. It was created by Kramer and Ruckelshaus following the Port Ludlow meetings to give the sponsoring organizations a way to play a valuable and integrated role without giving them veto power, or reverting to separate regulatory actions. It made them part of the innovation and progress, and gained for the new effort the benefits of their experience.

These regulatory and other existing entities had not previously worked together on a regular basis, so the precedent will be useful in future implementation and review efforts.

The remaining challenges include:

- The TRT no longer exists in the form described above, and new arrangements for gaining scientific input are being formed. However, scientific input and interaction at the regional and local levels will be important to making plan adjustments and upgrades and to developing and assessing implementation actions.
- The lack of a specific resource that can have a similar, if not expanded, level of scientific impact and interaction is worrisome in terms of quality and value of the next stages of implementation and, where necessary, plan revision. (The PSP later organized a science panel, reflecting a recognition of this need.)
- Coordination of policy among the state, federal, tribal, and local government entities will still be necessary, so a way to gain consultation through a group like the Policy Work Group is still needed.

Informal, but Crucial Staff Functions and Approach

The Shared Strategy staff, including the executive director Jim Kramer, the associate director, and the watershed liaisons through commitment, constant critiquing of their own efforts, structure, and impact, strategic long term thinking, thoughtful prioritization of their time and of issues, and careful use of financial resources strengthened capacity at all levels through informal activities such as: supporting local leaders and bolstering their standing among their constituents, helping Development Committee/Recovery Council members to be effective in their policy making, and ensuring that process and policy ideas were vetted among leaders and stakeholders and that no one was surprised or embarrassed. By being aware of concerns and sensitivities and spending the needed time for doing so, presenting ideas early, prior to full development so that useful input could easily be incorporated and concerns addressed, quality and acceptance of proposals would be improved. By taking the time for considering the best “messenger” or best the best forum or vehicle for raising a given issue, they helped reduce misunderstandings, blockages and conflicts.

- Understand the informal and formal protocols of the different groups so as to approach issues respectfully. If a tribe or tribal institution, or a state agency has specific channels through which an issue would be vetted, learn these ways and respect them.
- Draft policies, approaches and concept papers to help focus the discussions on policies and processes to be discussed.
 - The “Democracy in Action” paper is one such example and led to the evolution from Development committee to Recovery Council with increased watershed involvement.
 - Another such example is how the finance strategy was developed (staff and Evergreen Consultants prepared draft ideas which would be shared informally with all key stakeholder groups—many of these—before any official meetings.)

A Finance Leadership Group was then formed to refine further and build leadership consensus on the recovery plan's finance strategy. This group then took it to the DC for discussion and ultimate approval. This careful process left policy control to the DC/RC, but brought thoughtful, vetted ideas to them to save time and maintain focus.

- As staff, they largely followed the dictum to be a resource, rather than a font of instructions and directives, to the watersheds.
 - The Shared Strategy staff tried to more often be in the position of providing help and resources, and asking for input, rather than being only a source of directives and deadlines. Directives, policies and, often deadlines, were better accepted if they reflected consultation and input and were not surprises. The need for this approach and skill in doing so evolved over time.
 - Listening to problems, providing advice and otherwise helping local groups be more effective, such as by bringing in Ruckelshaus, Kramer, or other Development Committee/Recovery Council members, or a peer from another location, to help assuage concerns of local officials and community members that were skeptical. In the formative period, this also took the form of helping to find representation for watershed councils from reluctant communities of interest.
 - Showing respect for the barriers and challenges local groups were experiencing and trying to help them find solutions.
 - Within limited resources, trying to ensure that scientific and other technical assistance was available to watersheds.
 - More generally, the Shared Strategy staff watershed liaisons did whatever they could to make the planning task feasible and palatable to the watersheds, while still maintaining a loyalty and focus on the deadlines and quality required.
- Manage, through the outreach efforts to the public, elected officials, interest group leaders and the media, the image of the Shared Strategy as an active, inclusive and transparent and positive effort to recovery salmon.

These functions and others provided the linkages among the structural groupings (Board, Recovery Council, Watershed Leads, TRT, Policy Work Group) that allowed the work to go forward and maintain the needed trust and cohesion. These are essential functions, and they were handled with sophistication, and through enormous effort and use of personal time. These functions are noted here in order to highlight the value of resources allocated to such a staff function, even when the coordinating entity does not have operational responsibility or any regulatory authority. Getting movement and action when there is no authority requires considerable time and effort and reliance on positive tools and trust.

Overall Impact

The capacity to recover salmon and address related issues is, in most watersheds, significantly enhanced and advanced over the fractious situation that previously existed. There is now a unified policy at the state level, approved and supported by federal authorities, and a policy and means for each Puget Sound watershed to pursue reasonably coordinated recovery goals through an approved plan that involved in its development a large segment of the interested local community, related local, state and federal agencies, and tribes. The Recovery Council is in place to provide coordination, problem solving, additional support to an integrated regional strategy, and persuasion as implementation challenges are faced. By all accounts, it is nearly impossible to imagine that a \$40 million per year budget (affected somewhat by major budget cuts in the recession of 2008–2009) would be forthcoming in the absence of this planning and infrastructure and the perception by federal and state authorities of the relevance of the plans and local and state commitment to them. Despite remaining issues in some watersheds and gaps in the overall plan, useful mechanisms are in place to pursue recovery and work through the remaining challenges. Among the remaining challenges is to integrate harvest and hatchery considerations more fully with the plans that were developed out of the Shared Strategy process.

The accomplishments and the mechanisms developed and implanted for implementation seem well suited to these issues in a way that the previous system, which depended upon traditional means of organizing agency and jurisdictional work, clearly did not. Early in the planning process, there was far more dependence upon NOAA, the regulatory agencies, and Shared Strategy staff. Now, if funding holds up, the watershed groups and the Recovery Council have full energy and momentum to do the work largely on their own. This aspect of self-generation and commitment is how it was intended and this has been accomplished. It is not perfect and the results are not assured, but it has the ability to improve itself, and represents a thoughtful and highly effective response to the challenge of salmon recovery and the difficult political and institutional setting and history in which such work would have to take place.

Transition from the Shared Strategy to the Puget Sound Partnership

As the planning period neared its end, there was talk of keeping the Shared Strategy board and staff in place, particularly because it was largely trusted and effective, and provided key functions as discussed above. But it was determined that the agency should keep its word and be dissolved.

In keeping with a long term results-oriented strategic view Kramer, working with Ruckelshaus, the Recovery Council, the Shared Strategy board, and the Policy Work Group, and drawing on staff support, initiated discussions about the follow-on effort at implementation, and expanding it to focus on overall Puget Sound restoration. The leadership of the Shared Strategy, including the Recovery Council, saw the need to gain broader community and political support to get on to the difficult tasks of implementing salmon recovery, and they also saw a benefit and

opportunity to deal with broader issues of economic and environmental concerns represented by other issues affecting Puget Sound. Many, but not all of the sources, pressures and competition for resources and policy emphasis, as well as the regulatory conflicts and issues, were similar to those in salmon recovery. So, the possibility of a sound-wide effort held some promise.

They raised their intent to deal with broader issues of economic and environmental with the incoming Governor, Christine Gregoire, following the election of 2004, and following exploration with her policy advisors and legislative leaders, as well as federal officials, the Governor proposed a Puget Sound Partnership, which, in 2007 was enacted into law, a new agency and overarching leadership, which would encompass the plan and structure produced by Shared Strategy. Hence, the implementation of the regional salmon recovery plans falls under the broader mandate of the PSP and its funding mechanism. It is important to remember that the initial idea for this broader effort came from the Shared Strategy staff and leadership.

In 2005, Governor Gregoire pledged to restore Puget Sound to a clean and healthy condition by 2020. In April, 2006 the legislature approved funding to start this initiative. On May 7, 2007 Governor Gregoire passed SB 5372, an Act Creating the Puget Sound Partnership.¹²² The Puget Sound Partnership is a state agency responsible for developing an “Action Agenda” by December 1, 2008 that will put the Puget Sound on the path to health by 2020. “The Partnership will also compile the available science and information about the state of the Sound, coordinate the efforts that are currently being made by various organizations, coordinate available resources and finally, hold these implementers of the Action Agenda accountable for money spent and for results for the Sound. The Partnership, in turn, will be answerable to the Governor, legislature, and citizens and is ultimately accountable, by law, for achieving the goal of a healthy Puget Sound by 2020.”¹²³ A full description of the Partnership is beyond the scope of this study.

In terms of the transition, the remaining challenges include¹²⁴:

¹²² Washington State Legislature. About SB 5372. Website: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=5372>

¹²³ Puget Sound Partnership. Website: <http://www.pugetsound.org/act/action/partnership>

¹²⁴ The challenges to the Puget Sound Partnership that are noted in this study were well known to the leadership of the Partnership as it began, and efforts have been made by that leadership to address them. However, this report ends its analysis with the end of Shared Strategy activity in the Fall of 2007 and does not track or attempt to evaluate the progress made by the Partnership, which is outside the scope of this study.

- The transition to the PSP, including the departure of the Shared Strategy board and staff, left a void in terms of a trusted team known to all of the players with knowledge of the progress, deficits, and sources of assistance, knowledge, and funding.
- The PSP, a state agency, with a leadership council chaired by a private citizen (Ruckelshaus) will take over much of the outreach to state and federal officials and funding sources, as well as to some of the science resources. This could strengthen the effort or create an extra layer of bureaucracy.
- The PSP has some authority and structural elements that could lead it to be more directive. This threatens, at least to some degree, the voluntary nature of the effort, which has in part accounted for cooperation with it. The voluntary nature of the Shared Strategy is widely credited with attracting and keeping the needed local and regional players involved. However, among the primary criticisms of the Shared Strategy was the lack of a sufficient degree of activity or authority to compel parties to take actions. Possibly there is enough consensus on the plans and the need for action that authority can be exercised effectively and compliance achieved at certain crucial junctures. Other parties say that the issues that will be most difficult, such as changes in land use, transportation and development patterns are not subject to directive, given the rights, relationships, and traditions that typically govern such actions. Possibly the approach pioneered by Shared Strategy, with collective decision making, serious and deep analysis and structured discussions over difficult issues, use of science, and seeking consensus and acceptance through respectful approaches and dialogue, combined with greater resources, incentives, and some threats or applications of sanctions may provide a new paradigm. If carefully developed and used, and faith kept with the in-depth, voluntary work and problem solving structures (like the Watershed leads and the Recovery Council) to address challenges, these new tools may be valuable additions.

Lessons Learned

Although one can identify weaknesses and gaps, the Shared Strategy spawned an institutionalized means of carrying out salmon recovery through a voluntary process and structure that surpassed anything that had existed or had been imagined before or, perhaps, during the Port Ludlow discussions. It did so with no formal authority, starting with no infrastructure, with only minimal funding, and only a small staff compared with the scope of the challenge. It succeeded by judiciously “borrowing” the authority of the participating entities that came from the tenuous Port Ludlow agreements and the collective authority of the initial development committee and nonprofit board of directors, and the Policy Work Group, as well as the reputation of William Ruckelshaus and the credibility of recognized regional leaders like Billy Frank and Ron Sims. Constant long-term thinking about the highly complex underlying politics, careful outreach and personal work, and building through performance and results developed

the needed credibility that at each step led to the next and finally to the regional plan, NOAA approval, and this expanded implementation funding and structure. What can be learned?

First, in grasping both the value and scope of what occurred, we can notice that the Shared Strategy moved salmon recovery in Puget Sound, a large and varied community and ecosystem from an insufficiently coordinated, funded or prepared status for doing the multi-layered work necessary for recovering salmon to a structure that was politically realistic, respectful of science, demonstrating the ability to coordinate and set regional priorities, and with an accepted and supported decision making process. To get from where it began to where it ended, the system for seeking salmon recovery went through four stages.

First, as Shared Strategy began, the “system” was reliant on as yet uncoordinated activities by regulatory and funding authorities, but where there were some examples of coordination and cooperation to draw upon (e.g., Tri-County, co-management, GSRO, Puget Sound Action Team), and where there was not yet an agreement on a coordinated planning method or structure, and where the threat of Federal action was still imminent.

Second, as the Shared Strategy began to organize, most of the authority and knowledge was still with the agencies and jurisdictions represented on the policy work group (which was already an improvement in coordination and information sharing and aiming efforts to work under the governance of the Development committee, rather than individual regulatory agencies and jurisdictions), with the TRT science goals.

At the third step, the individual influence of its members became a collective regional leadership through the functioning of the Development Committee (supported by the efforts of Kramer and the staff, and Ruckelshaus leadership), the intended system began to coordinate policy and priorities of both local efforts on planning and the related efforts of regulatory authorities.

At the fourth step, the system went from concentrating coordination and leadership in the Development Committee/Recovery Council and staff to a stage where the watersheds became the drivers of the implementation phase, with continued policy coordination and oversight at the regional level, but including watershed leadership in a more complete way.

Hence, as the Shared Strategy gave way to the Puget Sound Partnership, the fears of the system collapsing that some expressed were overtaken by the widespread credibility and participation in, the effort in development, coordination and oversight of the watershed plans. Most of those at interest or with authority or resources were now invested in and participating in a system whose ground rules were well accepted and established. The momentum for salmon recovery was in the communities and community leadership, and coordinated across localities and across the spectrum of interests, with regulators at the table as partners not as antagonists of either the farmers, environmentalists or developers. The transition from ineffective top down efforts of many years to a bottom up effort with significant momentum had been completed, as intended.

Initially, the Policy Work Group, which perhaps represented the places where formal authority and much knowledge and political influence existed, played a major role, but later the knowledge and authority increased at the local watershed level, and in the Recovery Council. Now, at the end of the planning process, and beginning of implementation, a much greater degree of the effort is reliant on the watershed councils, which have plans, greater resources, stronger and broader membership and staffing—though still with many deficits in needed resources.

This transition was planned and accomplished by an initial careful evaluation of the circumstances by Kramer, Ruckelshaus, and others, setting clear goals and a structure that could achieve this change to locally driven and regionally coordinated change. It moved to then relying on the voluntary framework of Recovery Council and watershed councils. This evolution also required the leadership and staff work that developed policies and programs of the Shared Strategy respecting the authority and staff expertise of the agencies and tribes through the Work Group and the Recovery council, and by learning about, respecting and focusing on support of the local watershed councils. The same type of listening and vetting was done with local agriculture and environmental groups.

The Shared Strategy governance structure and its development may represent a new paradigm of balancing centralized regulatory authority and standards with localized and voluntary development of the means of compliance and local problem solving. The result is a realignment of authority and activity better reflecting the problem to be solved than the formal agency authority and traditions. Under the new system, which does not take away authority, but coordinates it and creates a different form of accountability, many regulatory, political and jurisdictional challenges that previously prevented coordination were overcome. A major result was much greater and more thoroughly integrated stakeholder and local actions, and support of re-prioritized and specific agency resources and enforcement related directly to the agreed upon and approved regional plan. The improved coordination, resource allocation, and better prospects results for solving the problem and, thereby, greater achievement of agency missions suggest that there may be something profound about this type of policy making. The building of a supplementary problem and policy specific infrastructure to develop and coordinate policy that includes a much greater local and grass roots component may suggest ways for multiple agencies and jurisdictions to better achieve results. Significant to note is that this was done without any formal changes in regulatory or treaty-granted authority or rights.

The lessons learned and principles applied are numerous and are detailed here in the hope that they will be useful to policy makers, scholars, and others who face complex resource management and recovery issues or who are developing policy in areas that cross many traditional levels and lines which challenge the needs for coordination, prioritization and focus across these lines.

Once again, we note that this report examines the effectiveness of the collaborative process as a mechanism for addressing a complex policy issue. It does not evaluate the scientific or policy value of the resulting plan. This study takes at face value the NOAA acceptance of the regional plan and the qualifications in the NOAA Supplement. We also recognize that the Shared Strategy salmon recovery plans will continue to be evaluated as the biological results of the salmon recovery efforts become more apparent.

The lessons of the Shared Strategy are of particular interest because environmental and related economic development issues increasingly cross traditional lines of authority, funding, and relationships. In this case, the effort spanned county, city, state, tribal, federal, and special district jurisdictions, as well as a variety of regulatory programs and private interests. No existing entity was in an obvious position to oversee the effort. Despite numerous localized efforts in the Puget Sound region and elsewhere that have taken a multi-jurisdictional approach to public policy issues, the Shared Strategy was largely unprecedented for its scale, the variety of watershed and community characteristics, and for the scope of its multi-jurisdictional coalition. It required building a new kind of organization and a new approach to planning, oversight, and implementation.

As with any effort undertaken under challenging circumstances, some omissions or failures can be identified. However, based on its goals and the challenges it faced, the Shared Strategy represents a superior effort at using a collaborative process in classical and innovative ways to address complex and polarizing issues.

Key Principles

The following principles and concepts that contributed significantly to the Shared Strategy can usefully be kept in mind when addressing large-scale, complex policy issues that affect many constituencies. These descriptions attempt, where possible, to illuminate the more general principle as well as show how they applied to the Shared Strategy. It is important to note that these principles in aggregate describe much of what led to the success of the Shared Strategy.

1. Understand the relevant history and institutions

Examining the history and roles of the institutions involved in an issue is crucial to understanding what the old arguments have been, what solutions have been attempted or considered, what smaller-scale successes can be built on, and what resources, knowledge and commitment can be evolved into addressing the current problem. This assessment will help to identify the institutions and resources at the local, state, and regional levels that can or should play a role. In addition, those who have been involved in the past can be valuable sources of data and other information, well as sources of influence and authority.

The Shared Strategy benefited greatly from understanding and respecting the existing institutional relationships and active participants, some of whom were, or would understandably be, concerned that earlier or ongoing efforts, and much useful knowledge,

would be overlooked by the Shared Strategy. The involvement of these institutions and leaders was crucial to the degree of cooperation achieved. Jim Kramer's efforts before Port Ludlow and during the early stages of the Shared Strategy to learn about the institutions and personalities that had been involved in salmon recovery were crucial, as was Ruckelshaus' philosophy of respect and inclusion. The Policy Work Group and the inclusive Development Committee also provided ongoing perspective on the history and the talents and concerns of those active in it. At the same time, the new structure for governance and decision making of the salmon recovery effort would combine these talents and perspectives in new ways.

A common temptation when trying to solve a difficult issue is to invent a new method or infrastructure. Not only can this approach be prohibitively expensive, but it can alienate important leaders and cut off access to existing expertise. The Shared Strategy made a concerted effort to draw on the strengths of existing institutions and people with expertise—even those who had been part of earlier conflicts. For example, although the regulatory agencies were seen by some parties as the enemy, or as insufficiently active, these agencies became members of the Policy Work Group and the Recovery Council. Tribal science staffs, many of which were strong by the late 1990s but were still unknown or mistrusted by some community, farm, and governmental groups, were also invited to be central players. Where their expertise was seen and utilized on a broad scale, the NOAA-appointed Puget Sound TRT was also actively engaged. Key parts of the existing watershed planning infrastructure was largely adopted, and active groups already in existence were substantially embraced (although, some difficulties and conflicts occurred, and some were never fully resolved in the time frame).

Also at work is the principle of preserving dignity of those who have tried—in ways meaningful to them—to address the issues in the past. The Policy Work Group was one means of showing respect and providing a substantive role to those who had regulatory authority but none of whom would be in a central leadership role. The Shared Strategy assumed that all of the agencies and institutions had tried hard to solve the problem of salmon protection within the scope of their own mandates, jurisdiction, and resources.

Kramer's early investment in building upon his already considerable experience by getting to know people, institutions and issues in anticipation of a possible new approach was an important investment. Among other benefits such an exploration can help expand beyond existing experience and relationships gained in a particular agency or part of the problem. One example was a greater realization than among many who have been involved in these issues and regulatory arenas is the role of tribes and the impact on landowners. Perhaps because tribes have more typically been involved in salmon issues and were organized and prepared for engagement, many tribes became centrally involved in the Shared Strategy work. Farm interests, particularly at a state wide level were less engaged, although much useful engagement was accomplished by local landowners and some state wide farm leaders as the process went on.

The value of this investment by Kramer, and the seeming “delays” of the Port Ludlow process perhaps describe the needed period of investment in learning parties’ interests and developing the needed relationships and understanding of the issues and politics.

2. Adopt an inclusive approach

Efforts to bring together polarized parties seem to be more successful if no party is asked to give up legally granted rights or authority. Later, agreements might emerge that prompt leaders to modify or suspend the application of certain of their rights or to pool their influence or resources. But a voluntary, non-coercive, collaborative process helps create a safer beginning, making it more likely that the disparate parties will choose to participate and suspend non-constructive exercise of their rights. The early agreement, as part of the formation of the Shared Strategy effort, that no state, federal, or tribal entity would be asked to give up statutory or treaty-granted powers was crucial to gaining participation of these entities.

In choosing this approach, there remains the question of how to achieve progress on difficult issues. This gave rise to the challenge, largely met, to develop a governance structure that helped to develop common commitment to the problem and its solutions and allowed parties to be flexible about the application of their rights. The regional priorities and coordination reflected the learning and trust that led to agreement in these areas after several years of work and collective review of science and other information.

Hence, the Shared Strategy did not attempt to strip counties, cities, tribes, or others of authority; rather, it found ways to encourage them to “lend” —selectively and by agreement— their authority to the Shared Strategy or to pool their efforts and resources once there was sufficient clarity on objectives, potential results and impacts, and sufficient trust to do so. One example was the use of funding and staff from county, state, tribal, federal, and other entities. Worth noting, however, is the fact that all parties sought to avoid federal imposition of a centrally prepared plan—a concern that appears to have substantially increased their flexibility and willingness to participate. Subsequently, in another change from the beginning of the planning process, most of the progress and flexibility came from interest and belief in the possibilities for results and trust in the process as it had evolved and proved its worth and trustworthiness. Given the degree of interest and participation and the relative effectiveness of the mechanisms for planning and decision making, even the pockets of concern and criticism—and the ongoing concern among even the most ardent supporters—still allowed the process to go forward at difficult moments.

The breadth of membership and visibility of the Port Ludlow signatories and of the Development Committee, as well as the Port Ludlow agreements themselves, also signaled a commitment to inclusion. The support and cooperation of the attorney general and governor were also valuable, particularly for gaining the trust of state agencies.

The inclusive approach also allowed the Shared Strategy to tap into the considerable amount of existing scientific, technical, and policy expertise that could aid in salmon recovery planning. This expertise resided in a number of state agencies and offices, counties, and tribes, as well as at the federal level. Harnessing these resources created significant capacity and induced federal, tribal, state, and local institutions to participate and ultimately become part of the implementation process. Building this expertise from scratch would have been nearly impossible and would not have gained the needed cooperation and support from the existing authorities.

3. There must be a reason for people to work together: Non-traditional agency posture regarding regulatory action and incentives

In this instance, NOAA worked to find a balance that conveyed a regulatory threat and also demonstrated its willingness to be part of and cooperative with a locally developed solution. Initial fears of an imposed solution that would not sufficiently recognize local conditions seemed to be a powerful reason for those who had been in conflict among themselves locally to try and find a way to work together. It was this fear of imposed solutions that pervaded most of the gatherings during the 90's. Fear of a "common enemy" or of lack of control over solutions often brings people to the table. NOAA's actions under Stelle as regional director helped to create the idea that NOAA would strictly enforce ESA requirements if voluntary compliance was not forthcoming. History of ESA plans imposed in other parts of the country also created concern, perhaps contributing even more than the recent enforcement actions in the Northwest.

NOAA also made clear, through the Port Ludlow meetings and at other times through that period, and particularly at the beginning of the planning process, its willingness to support a locally driven collaborative effort. A combination of its senior staff and other involvement by Darm, Lohn, Elizabeth Babcock and others, and financial support provided a balanced set of signals. This is a difficult balance to achieve, and considerable behind scenes work is said to have taken place discussing what signals would be effective and how they would be read. This balance and the actions to communicate it are affected by several of the other categories in this section, including understanding the history, having leaders in the community that are able to work together, and whether or not the planning structure that is proposed actually seems workable. The agency, as a key sponsor (defined below) is in a position to establish the standards for its cooperation, but this should be done not only consistent with mission, but in consultation with the local leadership.

Subsequently, the role of a regulatory agency in a process like the Shared Strategy also requires a balance that is not typical to traditional regulatory postures. It must participate as an equal at the table, but not in its regulatory role, and must also be in the position to ensure that initial parameters of the process can support the needed regulatory standards, then play a participatory and supportive role, without trying to dictate the outcome. Rather the agency will have dictated (after some constructive consultation) the standard and goals, but not the means

to reach it, leaving the latter to the parties. This departs from traditional regulatory tools and behaviors, but appears to have been balanced well by NOAA through its participation at Port Ludlow, and onward on the Policy Work Group, Development Committee/Recovery Council, and in reviewing the final plan for approval. The tools are developed to fit the challenge, rather than relying on one traditional set of tools.

There must also be a reason for people to come together, usually a combination of fears and incentives, and the responsible agency usually holds important keys to both. Later, other reasons, such as interim successes and common purpose become stronger, but the initial posture of the agency and its ongoing behavior will strongly affect the outcome. Non-traditional processes will pose challenges and the behavior of and tools used by NOAA in this instance bear scrutiny for identification of useful tools. Providing a path that honors the efforts of those that have had responsibilities and interest and helps them succeed in a manner that allows them to share in the accomplishment seems important, particularly when a sustained effort is necessary in order to make a difference.

4. Deploy trusted leaders as potential “conveners,” and work to evolve personal trust to build trust in the process and its institutions

People like Ruckelshaus, Frank, Sims, Munroe and Evans, most of whom were outside of state or federal government and were respected for their intentions and integrity, helped gain the trust and involvement of the crucial tribal, local government, business, and agricultural constituencies while retaining the trust of state and federal officials. The reputations of these leaders—and the symbolism of their commitment—attracted other regional leaders and convinced local leaders that this effort was not business as usual. Sims is credited with first seeing the need for iconic leaders outside of local, state, and federal government to bring people together.

The principle of using “conveners” to galvanize participants is separate from the question of oversight and coordination—although in mediation the initial conveners are often part of the mediation team and the planning and implementation phase. In this instance, Sims and others advocated the involvement of Ruckelshaus and Evans, and they approached the attorney general, the governor, and NOAA for the needed formal sponsorship before convening the Port Ludlow meetings. In other circumstance, such leaders could be appointed by a governor in consultation with the federal authority and other constituencies. But an extra-governmental response seems to have been essential in light of the history and mistrust of the actions and structure of government salmon recovery programs.

As the effort progressed, its momentum and credibility depended less on the reputations of the initial leaders and more on actual accomplishments, improved local relationships, and the commitment of the Shared Strategy staff, and the existence and effectiveness the Development Committee, and local watershed groups. The acceptance of the regional plan by NOAA and increased funding represented yet another stage, in which key entities and leaders were still

important but the well known personalities and the symbolism of their involvement receded in their centrality as real progress could be seen.

In the final stage, as the Shared Strategy planning stage was discontinued and the PSP took over for implementation, the reliance on individual conveners was even further diminished; the credibility of the system and its accomplishments were the key to a successful transition. This is a testament to the value seen in the process by those participating and relying on the system.

5. Written agreements to increase clarity and confidence

The initial agreement at Port Ludlow provided the blue print for how the planning process would work, and captured a variety of commitments to participate, in what form, and how the process would be supported. While the agreement itself had value as a "constitution" for what was agreed to and minimizing potential confusion or later concerns that might arise, the importance of the problem solving that led up to it is critical to creating a clear, effective, and shared understanding of how the work would proceed. The Port Ludlow Agreement was the first agreement, and was important simply as symbolizing to all parties that some important progress had occurred, as well as for defining for all what they had agreed to. This also provided a document that could be shown to the constituency members who had not participated at Port Ludlow to show what had been agreed to.

The Shared Strategy kept written records of meetings and decisions and a very substantial amount of this material was on the organization's website. The next comprehensive written agreements were centered on the watershed plans and the regional plan which amalgamated these. The watershed plans were, in essence, agreements by representatives on the watershed councils of what they and any institutions they represented at the table were committing to do. (This was true in almost all watersheds.) The regional Shared Strategy plan, encompassing the 14 watershed plans and related additional issues, represents the overall agreement of what they agreed collectively to do. Having these records of agreement are important to showing progress, compelling the discussions to a point of closure as the parties seek to express clearly what they have agreed to. Such clarification and memorialization avoids confusion later, and for displaying to sponsors and others the agreements and related mutual commitments that have been made.

6. Create broad-based awareness and support

Widespread awareness of the importance and impact of salmon recovery and of progress that was being made in planning, gathering resources, and in the early mitigation project work, helped to build momentum and belief that the large task could be accomplished. The awareness built outside of those directly involved—especially among public policy and business community leaders—not only created awareness of the effort and its breadth, but also helped mitigate opposition to the Shared Strategy and helped build political and financial support. The initial presentations at the Seattle Chamber of Commerce meeting in 1998 co-chaired by

prominent leaders such as Attorney General Gregoire and Ruckelshaus helped spread awareness. Later, the Salmon Summits, newsletters, and other efforts added further credibility.

The business community played a number of important roles; a business community member sat on the Shared Strategy board of directors, and contributions from businesses to help fund events and activities related to salmon recovery, such as the Salmon Summits, in the early planning phases before there was sufficient progress to garner public and foundation funding. Private funding also helped avoid criticisms that can arise when public funds are used for such events. Buy-in from business leaders was also important because environmental initiatives can at certain points require water use or land use restrictions or other conservation measures that can affect businesses. For example, the involvement of the Master Builders on the Development Committee was helpful in paving the way for the Shared Strategy's success.

Ruckelshaus had a role in starting the Washington Roundtable during his time as a Weyerhaeuser vice president in the late 1970s, and he had been in the private sector since leaving public service in the 1970s (except for a brief return to EPA during the Reagan administration). He was thus able to help with these connections to the business community. Former public officials Evans and Munro, among others, also enjoyed good standing with the private sector. Overall, business involvement was not as robust at the regional or local levels as was anticipated, and it remains to be seen—as water and land use issues become more central to local salmon recovery decisions—whether this lesser involvement in the planning stages will affect the success of the implementation process. At least, the degree of business awareness and involvement served to reduce the possibility of later differences or concern with policy or resource decisions made from the Shared Strategy process, or related requests for state or federal funds.

The involvement of other interests, including environmental groups, tribes, the agricultural community, and local governments, appears to have been strengthened by outreach and publicity efforts. Much favorable publicity resulted from the Salmon Summits, awards and recognition, and newsletters, as well as the respectful attention these groups received from the Shared Strategy staff and leadership. Meetings of the various councils and committees as well as special workshops were held all around the Sound to give local staff, officials, and landowners an opportunity to attend and learn about the issues and the efforts under consideration. The highly public awards given to local groups and others that exemplified results in habitat restoration, recovery, or other substantive achievements supporting salmon recovery were helpful in highlighting the kinds of activities around which disparate groups were coming together.

The Shared Strategy staff also made significant efforts to persuade elected officials, agency leaders, tribal officials, environmental leaders, and their staff to attend the major events so they could see who else was involved, , in addition to gaining substantive information about what was being attempted and discussed. Ultimately, it would have been almost impossible for

anyone interested or involved in salmon recovery or natural resource policy issues to be unaware of the Shared Strategy. These activities were carried out in a well-produced, professional, and accessible way, which contributed to creating a “salmon recovery community.”

7. Consider choosing a non-authoritative entity to coordinate

Because of the history of the salmon recovery problem, and the related conflicts and concerns, an independent, non-authoritative coordinating entity was needed that would coordinate the efforts of existing entities and stakeholders. This provided a coordinating entity that was trusted (it reflected the Port Ludlow agreement) and was not feared. The Shared Strategy nonprofit with a small staff and no formal authority managed to thread between the fears that existing power and authority would be usurped, but still gain a means of coordination and implementation. Under the circumstances and reflecting the history, an entity with significant formal authority could not have brought a sufficient range of parties to the table. Yet, a coordinating entity was necessary in order to deal with the many challenging tasks that would have to be performed. Such central coordination was crucial, for example, for ensuring that science would play a significant role in setting goals and reviewing plans. Without the intense work done by Shared Strategy, the plans would not have had the same opportunity to incorporate the TRT’s scientific input.

The Shared Strategy developed the needed authority through its actions and membership on the key groups (Development Committee/Recovery Council, etc.), But it was the non-threatening, coordinating posture that provided much of the initial acceptance of the Shared Strategy as the coordinating entity. Because it was a creature of the full range of constituents, governed by the board on business, and by the highly representative Development Committee on policy, it had the needed credibility. Had it been more independent, it may not have been able to attract the initial membership and support that was so crucial to ultimately producing a plan.

This coordinating entity consisted of Kramer and the small Shared Strategy staff. In what appears to be a careful distribution of roles relative to the challenge, Kramer exercised strategic leadership at all stages, and the staff initiated or suggested and implemented strategic initiatives, outreach, needed contracting and meeting support, and, as described earlier, offered support to the Development Committee/Recovery Council and the Watershed Leads group. The coordinating entity had only as much authority as it could earn or assert without alienating the Shared Strategy participants. To many, this appeared to be a weakness and a limitation. However, by providing good service, helping to resolve previously intractable conflicts, behaving professionally, building trust, and showing results, the Shared Strategy staff, and particularly Jim Kramer, developed considerable independent influence and impact, and, thereby, authority. Keeping the central staff small was symbolically and financially important. The Shared Strategy relied on the cooperation of existing entities for many functions, which had the benefit of redirecting resources of existing entities toward the goals of the planning effort. Thus the staff

was not a competitor for local resources. This also showed respect for the existing entities, as discussed earlier. The Shared Strategy staff focused on building the credibility and effectiveness of the other parts of the system—in particular, to help participants gain access to resources and to scientific and other information, to help build community support for the salmon recovery activities, and to provide incentives for meeting deadlines and achieving a level of quality acceptable to NOAA. They also focused on creating regional metrics and other forms of accountability that could not be created or collected elsewhere.

By performing tasks that could not be adequately or acceptably performed at the local level or by existing state or federal institutions, the Shared Strategy staff and Kramer also created value for the rest of the planning system, thereby gaining respect and influence. As one important example, it worked on system-wide tasks such as long-term financial planning, developing a political strategy for obtaining funds, and engaging a well-respected consultant, Evergreen Funding Consultants, to determine funding needs, sources, and strategies. Such a non-authoritative entity must build influence in order to play its role, and must do so by building trust, building critical political momentum, and providing services and gaining results seen as valuable.

Although the staff made substantial demands on watersheds, particularly in terms of deadlines and quality standards for the local plans, they preceded and balanced this with efforts that benefited the watersheds—including funding, technical assistance, staff responsiveness, political advice, problem-solving help, and dealing with state and federal-level issues and politics. This seems to have contributed to motivation and momentum within the watersheds. Certainly, the many comments on the staff's effectiveness would suggest so.

More authority and resources might have made the staff's work easier, but at a much greater scale, it might also have prevented agreement at Port Ludlow and the critical mass of early support from key leaders. However, greater funding for technical assistance and other help for watersheds, applied at the right moment, might have given the Shared Strategy staff greater leverage with the watersheds by providing valuable assistance that could have eased the work and strengthened many of the plans. For other efforts of this type, we would recommend greater resources for the central staff to use for these purposes, as well as greater staff resources for a task of this magnitude.

8. Gain consensus on the planning process

The Shared Strategy process and its governance structure were both products of agreement. It is common in mediation to recognize that collaborative solutions must be voluntary.¹²⁵ The

¹²⁵ Jonathan Brock and Gerald Cormick. Can Negotiation be Institutionalized or Mandated? Lessons from Public Policy and Regulatory Conflicts. Mediation Research, K. Kressel, D. Pruitt and associates. Josey-Bass Inc, San Francisco, CA. 1989. pp. 138-65.

consent of all parties to the process itself brings and keeps people initially at the table and gives the later outcome its legitimacy. The various stakeholders joined the Shared Strategy process because they agreed to the process, including a non-authoritative coordinating entity. The Port Ludlow agreements, and the discussions leading up to them, kept participants engaged and supportive. Without such an agreed upon approach, any salmon recovery effort might have become a much easier target of criticism over the process or the outcome—particularly from lawmakers and others who might later be asked to fund implementation or from local state, or tribal entities that might have been left out of a less inclusive process, or who may have disagreed with an imposed approach. (Objections did arise from some watersheds and other parties, but they did not undo the plan, the funding, or overall support, probably because support for the process was so widespread.) As noted elsewhere, most of the substantive shortcomings in the regional plan and prospects for implementation were acknowledged by Shared Strategy leadership, in the NOAA Supplement, and were slated to be addressed in the next phase under the Puget Sound Partnership. (Other criticisms remained concerning whether or not the overall plan or structure could go far enough. For the most part, these concerns appear to be part of the PSP agenda. As noted, these concerns will be assessed when the biological impacts are assessed at the appropriate time, and are outside the scope of this study.)

In general, lack of support for the process itself can easily lead to opposition to the outcome—or noncompliance. Had a single major constituency—such as a broad segment of the tribes, environmental groups, or farming interests—walked away or protested the process, the entire effort almost certainly would have been in jeopardy.

Also worth noting is the amount of time taken to reach agreement on a framework. This timeline might have been accelerated had the governor or other leaders deputized people such as Ruckelshaus and Frank to develop a framework. But a long gestation period leading to the establishment of the Shared Strategy organization and process was probably inevitable because the following tasks had to be undertaken:¹²⁶

- Identify potential leaders to convene and gain the support of others.
- Identify the parties that must be involved. (This task can be completed quickly if the parties are used to dealing with each other on such issues, but in this instance many of the parties had not been at a similar table with the others.)
- Learn enough about the barriers (such as information deficits, legal barriers, funding obstacles, and political issues) to develop some potential approaches. (This task was undertaken through informal, one-on-one contact as well as the first Port Ludlow meeting and the interregnum between the first and second meetings.)

¹²⁶ Susskind, Lawrence, Sarah McKearnan, Jennifer Thomas-Larmer. Consensus Building Handbook: A comprehensive guide to reaching agreement. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1999.

- Maintain sufficient contact with sources of formal and informal authority to ward off suspicions, keep down rumors, and to incrementally gain support.
- Form and begin to operate a process that meets the goals and objections of those that are needed for participation, and from the institution that must ultimately accept the outcome.
- Give that process tasks and allow it time to make progress and show success sufficient to build the needed trust and keep skeptics from too easily abandoning the effort.

Since these steps, at the beginning when there is still substantial mistrust, require individual conversations, the gestation period can be longer than the actual work of reaching agreement under the agreed upon process. This is to be expected, and the needed investment made.

Many participants in the Shared Strategy noted the importance of the voluntary nature of the process and how it motivated their constituencies to agree and to stay involved. Some have worried that the new PSP, a state agency with some sanctions available, might be less successful. Others are less concerned because the PSP system is itself the product of agreement. One concern is that the PSP might resort to compulsory tools too quickly.

The support of legitimate sources of authority—such as NOAA, tribes, the governor, and the state legislature—is also crucial. In this case, there would have been little incentive to participate if NOAA had not expressed its commitment to taking the plan seriously. Support from major state authorities was also crucial because they would be essential to both the planning and implementation stages. Support from tribal governments and entities such as the NWIFC were equally crucial because, with their legal standing regarding the salmon fishery and moral standing and political influence regarding environmental issues, no major salmon policy could be implemented without their involvement. The state and federal governments were asked to fund much of the plan activity, so their initial support for the process was also critical. Their participation as partners in the Port Ludlow process and agreement was essential to getting both a plan and later funding. Among other influence, environmental groups had standing to litigate in the absence of an agreeable plan. We can list many others.

Within this agreed upon framework (the Port Ludlow agreement and other agreements in the Development Committee) there was also a need for clear management of the process. Plan deadlines and other “requirements” were imposed and created significant stir. However, the agreement to participate in the overall process, the shared policy and governance on the larger parameters and questions, and the overall trust that developed for Kramer and the staff, allowed these needed management rigidities to be effected.

9. Equalize resources

A major challenge was the differences in capacity among the watersheds. Some counties had large tax bases and others did not; other differences included the mix of urban and rural areas.

Some watersheds were already involved in salmon recovery or related work, while others did not. Other disparities included the availability of data and technically knowledgeable staff, broadly representative planning committees, knowledge and experience in conflict resolution, leadership at the staff and community level, and experience in reaching into the community. In the end, this disparity in technical staff and related capacity for data collection and analysis and plan development may be one of the largest factors accounting for quality differences and at least a large proportion of concern and conflict over plan adequacy.

In terms of the most tangible, technical knowledge, the TRT helped level the playing field by providing science background, input, a planning template, and later assistance and review. The Shared Strategy staff watershed liaisons helped watersheds access information and funding (including SRF Board funds). The “case study” that put some extra resources into Snohomish County demonstrated what could be done with an infusion of technical resources, although Snohomish was already fairly well staffed relative to many other watersheds and had experience in managing contentious issues. However, it does not appear that this inequality in technical resources was sufficiently addressed. By the time the need and burden on TRT and others was recognized, there was not, apparently sufficient time to make the needed adjustments.

Providing expertise to equalize these disparities would be valuable in future efforts of a similar nature. Even providing a few planner or analyst positions, or some consulting dollars and some additional resources for training or coaching in conflict resolution can pay dividends. In this case, however, certain barriers and sensitivities stood in the way of doing more in this area. As mentioned earlier, the Shared Strategy staff and budget were kept deliberately small in light of sensitivities in the local areas. Also, finding a way to distribute additional funds, other than through the SRF Board process, might have required some time. Finding a way to ensure sufficient local resources in a way that supports the overall process would be valuable in future efforts.

Despite efforts that could be made, the difference in experience and resources will necessarily mean that some localities will have an easier time of meeting the expected standards than others, and this may affect the result. Assessing these differences may lead to ways to address the disparities or adjust expectations.

10. Use science, metrics, and data

Often forgotten in discussions of collaborative problem solving is the importance of goals and measurements. The literature on collaborative processes suggests the importance of concrete goals and related measures,¹²⁷ and the Shared Strategy was attentive to that. Its efforts included the simple act of setting deadlines for watershed plans because ongoing interest and funding commitments depended on visible results. (This can be particularly true with planning

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

activities because funds for planning are harder to justify than for action and results.) Interim deadlines (draft plans were due by June 2004 and final plans were due a year later in June 2005), allowed participants, funders, and interested observers to see the progress being made.

At another level, the initial setting of population targets based on ranges set by the TRT provided a common frame of reference across the watersheds and a common basic methodology. Within each watershed, tribal, business, and farm interests were asked to make similar sacrifices as their counterparts in other watersheds. Critics later pointed out that some plans didn't go far enough in meeting the Shared Strategy goals. But the consistency of methodology and use of the same team of experts to assess the science gave the plans credibility and probably aided consistency.

The review of the plan drafts by the TRT—in an advisory capacity—resulted in many changes to the plans, some of them substantial. Deficiencies remained, as cited in the NOAA Supplement, but further improvements were planned for the implementation stage.

This rigorous approach to goal setting helped avoid two pitfalls: having goals become political in nature and adopting a least-common-denominator approach to goal setting. The consistency of the goals across watersheds allowed for flexibility in the approach of individual watershed planning groups. A third type of metric used was the performance metric for salmon recovery efforts. A somewhat less quantitative measure consisted of awards and recognition for certain successes or behaviors. The Shared Strategy also kept track of projects and project results, noting progress in returning fish populations and improvement in habitat and infrastructure. These were largely from SRF Board-funded projects.

To showcase progress and possibilities Shared Strategy specifically included funding and work on habitat and other projects in parallel with planning activities to produce observable results that would maintain interest, demonstrate progress and the ability to work together, provide interim successes and create local practice at joint selection of things to work on.

The Shared Strategy also used performance metrics to track progress in returning fish populations and improvement in habitat and infrastructure. In the last six months of the Shared Strategy, the Watershed Leads group recommended a report card system to allow each watershed to grade its progress based on a variety of quantitative and qualitative measures. This illustrated the degree of progress regarding attention to accountability and a willingness to be accountable. While the report card system was not adopted prior to the transition to PSP, the PSP was able to move forward with a degree of measurement and accountability that would have been unimaginable at the beginning of the Shared Strategy effort.

The staff's work and discussions with the Development Committee/Recovery Council and Watershed Leads group was constantly focused on trying to identify and measure results that

met the goals. Metrics were seen as a key to accountability and credibility, which is consistent with reports from other conflict resolution literature.¹²⁸ This is not an easy task, but it is important for focusing resources and for gaining agreement on useful activities. The capacity to agree upon and use metrics and data seems to have improved with time and the greater understanding of data and issues that evolved.

11. Integrate science

The use of science in the Shared Strategy process merits emulation. Science-based targets using standardized, transparent methods, provided an objective standard that was applied equitably and nonpolitically to all watersheds. This objective underpinning to the planning process went largely unchallenged by those participating, although there were, as noted, some—mostly external—external criticisms regarding the sufficiency of the standards or rigor with which watersheds were held to the standards. To gain this result, the relationship of the science resource was carefully managed and structured to try and gain appropriate use of science that would be embraced for policy purposes.

Interestingly, the science was provided by the TRT, which was appointed by NOAA, and NOAA was the entity that would pass judgment on the plans. However, the TRT only set ranges for each watershed; the co-managers of the state fishery (the treaty tribes and the State Department of Fish and Wildlife) as the policy makers set the actual targets within those ranges. This approach provided some degree of local control and ownership of the targets, but also allowed NOAA as the regulator to appoint those who would develop the target ranges by which the sufficiency of the plans would be judged. Even though NOAA policy staff did not influence the TRT targets, this appointment process gave legitimacy to the targets as part of the standard to which NOAA would later hold the plans. The independence of the TRT, in yet another way, lent legitimacy to the target setting. This is an interesting balance of influence over the use of science in policy-making and related regulation and bears examination and emulation in appropriate settings. This combination of science and policy seems to have added to the acceptability of the targets as the basis of the plans.

The Puget Sound TRT's composition immediately lent it credibility. It was headed by a senior NOAA scientist and included state agency and tribal scientists. This mix of scientific backgrounds resulted in a relatively broad-based group, many with significant experience in the field, some with knowledge of NOAA policy obligations and experience, and others with expertise related to the Puget Sound and its fisheries. The formation of the TRT coincided with the ESA listing and predated the establishment of the Shared Strategy; its charter was independent of NOAA policy-making and was only to provide scientific input to the Puget Sound effort

¹²⁸ *ibid.*

Involvement of scientific experts in such efforts often consists of getting initial science input and later submitting a final plan to the appropriate science group, where it receives critical commentary. This typical arms-length method, which is usually done in the interest of scientific independence, misses an opportunity for mutual education and for introducing applicable science into the policy-making process. (Certainly, there are instances when scientific evaluations should be undertaken with minimal interaction, but the benefits to interaction under circumstances like development of recovery plans seems evident.)

While there was some initial resistance and then uncertainty about how the TRT could become productively involved without sacrificing independence and objectivity, the TRT and the Shared Strategy eventually developed a relationship and process for interacting with the watersheds and other aspects of the planning process that brought useful insights to policy makers and returned information of value to the science team as they worked further to play their role. However, this task placed heavy demands on the TRT members and was still inadequate to make up for all the technical disparities at the local level. Thus, in future efforts this local assistance role should probably be staffed so that it is not as dependent on the personal time of those on an entity such as the TRT, but coordination with the TRT entity or a member would be important to maintain.

Key features of this approach included:

- Appointing an independent science team with a mix of views and backgrounds that is likely to have credibility with policy makers.
- Placing the science team at the level where decisions will be made about acceptance of the plan.
- Including a formal adoption of the science team's goals by policy entities close to the issues and responsible for solutions.
- Having the science team provide or at least oversee or advise scientific and technical assistance to the local level, particularly to balance out disparities in scientific resources. Add additional technical resources as needed to assure adequate technical expertise.
- Ensure a sufficient degree of interaction of policy makers and scientists so that the scientists learn the regional and local issues and challenges, and so policy makers learn more in depth about the science involved. The quality of policy work and policy decisions will thereby benefit rather than only be judged.
- Having the science team provide a planning template to show what elements should be included in the plan. This provides a degree of standardization and quality control. This should, as shown in Shared Strategy, be a the product of interaction, not simply handed down. To be useful such a template must be understandable to the users and fit the context.

- Having the team review the plans prior to final submission. This can lead to conflict, but if trust and respect have been built up, these reviews can be positive rather than as a “gotcha.”
- If there is to be interaction between policy and science, safeguard the scientific independence, and leave the scientists in scientific roles and the policy makers in their roles.

The TRT was apparently also a major player in the development of the NOAA Supplement, which noted some plan shortcomings. This demonstrated the TRT’s ability to maintain objectivity and independence in weighing the adequacy of the plan. It appears that the knowledge that TRT members gained about local challenges helped them better understand the real nature of the barriers and deficiencies in the plans.

This overall approach to incorporating scientific expertise can be tried in other settings, with modifications appropriate to the circumstances. Science was more pervasively reflected in the plans than probably would have been the case under more traditional arrangements. This is particularly true because of the minimal expertise available in many watersheds, and because of the extensive interaction of the TRT with Shared Strategy. Even though the deficits in expertise could have been addressed in other ways, such as through grants for hiring experts, the team’s interaction with regional and local participants helped raise the quality and consistency of the plans.

12. Maintain continuous communications among parties

Ongoing contact between the Shared Strategy and federal and state government agencies, tribal fisheries authorities, and the counties—through the Policy Work Group and Development Committee/Recovery Council as well as through informal discussions with all parties—provided a constant flow of information. This kept concerns and rumors in abeyance and made expertise, resources, historical knowledge, and institutional memories available where needed. This set of linkages also set the stage for later acceptance of the plan by state and federal authorities.

The very structured nature of the interactions—with watershed planning groups, watershed leads coordination, the Development Committee/Recovery Council, and the interactions with the Policy Work Group and the TRT—provided interactions based on the needed problem solving, and the needed coordination between local and regional levels, across jurisdictions and among levels. Unstructured discussions, without a thoughtful set of forums, or forms lacking in staff work to connect them would be too unpredictable and unproductive and would not likely maintain interest nor achieve results.

A crucial linkage was to federal authorities—in particular, to NOAA through Darm, Lohn, and others, as well to the Congressional delegation of Murray, Dicks, and Dunn—to give them a sense of the progress being made and what roles they might be asked to play, to gain information or resources from them, and to allow them to ask questions in low-key settings.

Similar value came from interaction with leaders of tribal fisheries interests and state officials. These interactions were typically carried out by Ruckelshaus and Kramer on behalf of the Shared Strategy, particularly the Development Committee/Recovery Council, often with participation from appropriate others, such as Frank, Sims, and Lohn, depending upon the issue or audience.

Connections with tribes were maintained at a number of levels—most regularly at the watershed level, but also at the regional level. Kramer, for example, frequently dealt with tribal leaders. Had a significant portion of tribal interests—such as the NWIFC or individual tribes—been opposed to the Shared Strategy, government support might have been reduced or might never have been forthcoming— not to mention the difficulty of producing the plans. A number of Washington tribes had a record of success in court and a willingness to engage in the legal arena. Treaty rights had been upheld in court, and tribal standing in fisheries and fisheries management had been recognized by the state.

The tribes had also become, over the preceding decades of co-management, important sources of science and data on fish issues in Puget Sound. They had scientists, technicians and other resources available to contribute to the recovery effort and in some watersheds tribes were the lead entities and otherwise provided key resources to local watershed planning groups. Where tribes and the other local groups worked together on the watershed recovery plans, the plans were widely regarded as more substantial (although the process was not always easy and did not always result in agreement between tribes and other constituencies).

13. Distinguishing voluntary participation in a collaborative process from independent action and decisions

Because there was a voluntary agreement (Port Ludlow Agreement) to have a collaborative planning process to develop a plan to submit for NOAA's approval and implement, everyone was there voluntarily. But, because of the pain and difficulty of getting to that agreement and the initial concern about the consequences of failure, there was not an ethic that interim dissatisfactions would lead to parties ending their voluntary participation.

While anyone could theoretically walk away, instead the ethic, reinforced by the broad leadership presence and actions as noted, was that the group had sufficient representation and forums through which to work on difficult issues: these forums and relationships would be used to work through differences, rather than assuming that an encountered impasse represented the end of discussions. The work by the staff and leadership to make these forums and informal interactions effective and respectful created an ongoing means of reinforcing the voluntary nature of the process by working to find solutions. The agreement at Port Ludlow was, further, an agreement to support the plan that was agreed to. Being present is voluntary, agreeing is voluntary, but there is an implicit, if not explicit, commitment to abide by the agreement, if reached. So, it is worthwhile to note the nuances of what is meant by voluntary in circumstances like this, and how those setting up and operating the process can work with the constraints and opportunities that this offers.

The specter of NOAA rejecting the effort and ensuing NOAA actions taking the matter out of local hands provided one of the few negative sanctions. The constant availability of Kramer, staff and Ruckelshaus and willingness of other leaders to invest time in problem solving—but particularly the existence of increasingly functional mechanisms for raising and resolving issues allowed voluntary participation to turn into results. The existence of funding, availability of scientific and technical assistance for local plans, and other available assistance for addressing local issues all created reasons for the parties to remain voluntarily engaged. Later, as noted, the results generated through projects and through advancing, and later accepted plans, created reasons to remain voluntarily engaged.

So, when seeking to begin a voluntary process, it should be recognized that volunteering is long term and requires also a commitment to problem solving and to an agreed upon result, and that the process must have mechanisms for reinforcing the value of the voluntary commitment. The stronger are these mechanisms and incentives (the prospect of no federal intervention, influence over one's local fate and influence over state policy, interim access to funds, the satisfaction of seeing a community work together, and significantly improved funding for implementation), the easier and more likely it is that the voluntary system will stay in place and making progress. In this instance, as in other highly polarized situation, voluntary is often the only way parties can become involved given internal politics and incentives and legitimate concerns about giving up rights and freedom of action. But a well crafted mechanism, attuned to the circumstances and effectively carried out can wring a substantial amount of collective action from voluntary action and lead to a funded, sponsored and collective agreement. Voluntary does not, in these circumstances, mean that participants are free to pick and choose, but that they volunteer to try and find a collective solution.

As confidence grows in the mechanisms, often people will accept more direction and suggestions from leadership, recognizing that leadership has also learned a lot about the concerns of the parties. Viewed in this light, and with the fact that there is agreement on the plan, in most quarters, possibly the more directive powers of the PSP may be accepted if appropriately applied in the context of respect for voluntary engagement. But in the early stages, following a long period of conflict and disagreement, a voluntary alliance may be a crucial entry to problem solving possibilities.

Shared Strategy provides examples of structures and actions needed to make this possible. In less complex circumstances, the efforts may be less involved, but the overall example is helpful to demonstrating how to create progress within a voluntary framework. Most successful mediation processes have this characteristic, so Shared Strategy has not plowed new ground in that sense, but it has illustrated the kinds of tools and structures that can be helpful in a particularly complex circumstance.

14. Sponsorship

Earlier in this analysis we have spoken of linkages and attachments to institutions that have regulatory authority or other formal interests in the outcome of the process. Here we add a slightly different category, that of “sponsors”, those that would have to approve or finance the outcome. Not all of those with whom linkages are necessary are sponsors in the sense of having the ability to authorize or pay for key activities in the planning and conflict resolution process and having the ability to approve the resolution, plan or proposal, and perhaps pay for its implementation. Linkages would be important to have with groups having relevant expertise, or interests important to the outcome, but they may not be in a position to authorize, approve or finance the activity. While some of the same entities are involved, the role of sponsors is sufficiently different to merit notice and establishing the needed set of contacts and relationships. Without the agreement of sponsors that the planning process was appropriate, the process would be at least suspect and uncertain, if not one that people might refuse to participate in.

The fact that NOAA supported the Shared Strategy process was particularly important, since NOAA was the agency that would determine the adequacy of the plan, and was in a position to help fund important aspects of the planning and the implementation. Support from key tribal leaders was important for, among other reasons, their treaty rights, which could be affected, and the substantial scientific and legal resources they could bring to bear. Of course, the Governor’s support and winning the support of departmental directors of key natural resource agencies was important to lending state authority and funding. Satisfaction with the process by key members of the Congressional delegation and others in Congress would also be necessary to funding and other legislation. Since local government would have to respond to the planning effort, in many cases with difficult decisions over many decades, their support of the process mattered.

The signatures of leaders from a representative group of governmental bodies on the Port Ludlow agreement represented a formal sponsorship of the process—a protocol that the agreed-upon process and its result would be taken seriously. Since these authorities would have to cooperate in the form of suspending, showing flexibility in, or altering regulations, or in allocating funds or staff time, their support of the process was essential to the credibility of the process. The signature of people representing most of these entities seems to have been important to initial credibility and prevented defections at early and later difficult moments. Knowing that entities with authority and resources would, in effect, “sponsor” the activity, pending a positive and agreed upon outcome, made it possible for the Shared Strategy entities to do the planning work, and for environmental leaders, leaders in business and agriculture and others in local governments to see the process as having the potential for impact.

Sponsorship is different than governance or participation, such on the Development Committee, or other negotiating group. Sponsorship, when sufficient, legitimizes the process and makes participation safe in that the result is being constructively anticipated by the entities with

authority to enact or fund the process. However, the process must also be agreeable to groups who may not have formal authority, but whose cooperation is otherwise important to developing an effective plan or agreement that can be implemented. Of course, these non-sponsoring groups often have legal standing, like environmental groups, depending upon the statute, to challenge the result of the collaborative process.

If the process is not satisfactory to those in authority—the sponsors—the odds that the outcome will be accepted are much lower. A related development in this case, the Policy Work Group, created a way for most sponsoring entities to remain involved and informed. In other instances we are aware of, less formal communication with sponsoring agencies is sufficient to the circumstances, as it was in this case with the Congressional delegation. Having appropriate sponsors, and keeping in touch with them, are important ingredients to carrying out a collaborative process that serves as a supplement to normal regulatory actions and powers.

15. Structure roles and responsibilities to ensure balance and a new outcome

The Port Ludlow meetings included many individuals and organizations who long had conflicts. Many on the Development Committee/Recovery Council and in the watershed planning groups had, at the outset, stark differences with one another. To enable these parties to work together productively and effectively, the Shared Strategy divided roles and responsibilities in a way that would ensure access to the full range of issues and decisions, and also ensure balance and tap into each party's strengths.

For example, the Shared Strategy board had fiduciary responsibility but no policy authority; the TRT had advisory and review roles but was not a final authority and had no direct policy role; the Policy Work Group was an advisory body that reviewed the watershed plans for policy value and consistency, but which also did not have final authority, but had representatives on the Development Committee; the Development Committee/Recovery Council had policy responsibility—and was the most representative and also with a high level regional overview; the watersheds had planning responsibility. The DC/RC, because of its representation and the senior levels at the table was an appropriate place functionally, from an influence point of view, and politically to place policy responsibility. The Policy Work Group would not have been, but because of the senior staff expertise there was a more useful forum for the type of policy exploration and vetting that it performed. The TRT was specifically engaged for science standards and input, and not placed in an ambiguous position with regard to policy influence.

Other examples can be cited to demonstrate the fit of the decision and working forums, and of roles to the substantive, political and information exchange needs, both to get the work done and to engender the needed balance of influence and trust. Other features of the structure included membership of the main regulatory bodies and tribes on the Development Committee/Recovery Council—as equals with the environmental groups, farm interests, local government, and other stakeholders. Overall, the structure and roles of Shared Strategy redefined the relationships among agencies, jurisdictions, tribes and many other interested and

affected parties so they could work together in a new way around what would be a new program and approach to salmon recovery. Official structures were left in place, not attacked or criticized, but were coordinated towards the aim of salmon recovery with new combinations of resources, inputs, priorities and authority aimed at the present goals and challenges. Without such careful thought and operation of the system, influence could have fallen to entities that could muster an alliance, the most resources, or might default to NOAA or some other regulatory entity.

The structure and membership were aimed at the task, and also recognized history and politics of the institutions involved. This careful and balanced structure, and the staff activities to support and keep information flowing, were crucial ingredients. Seeing this example is a reminder to avoid simply having representative groups, without sufficient reference to function, structure and linkages, and placing the appropriate degree of influence with each group.

16. Maintain continuity and quality of leadership

Those involved in planning the Port Ludlow meetings—the tribal, agency, and community leaders—and the signatory organizations to the Port Ludlow agreements later became involved in the planning structure, including the Policy Work Group, the TRT, the Development Committee, and the board of directors. This continuity meant that the “legislative history” of the agreement would be known and the individuals involved would be in a better position to make progress.

Continuity can also be found in the transition from the Shared Strategy structure and representation to the PSP. The Recovery Council and its relationship to the watershed leads group and the 14 watersheds have remained largely intact under the PSP. However, the dissolution of the Shared Strategy corporate organization and staff, which was planned at Port Ludlow, created discontinuity in several respects. The departure of Kramer and his staff left a significant void in organizational capacity, informal knowledge, and, importantly, trust. Interviews for this report have shown that the new leadership and staff will have to re-earn that trust.

In one important piece of continuity, Ruckelshaus became chair of the PSP Leadership Council, overseeing the effort.¹²⁹ He was replaced as chair of the Recovery Council by Darlene

¹²⁹ When Ruckelshaus resigned from the Recovery Council to become the chairman of the Leadership Council of the new Puget Sound Partnership, he was succeeded as chair of the Recovery Council by Darlene Kordonowy, Mayor of Bainbridge Island and Kevin Ranker, San Juan County Council member as co-chairs. Steve Tharinger, a county commissioner, who had long chaired the Dungeness River Management Team, one of the 14 watershed planning groups, and who had been a member of the Recovery Council, became head of the SRF Board. Tharinger also became a member of the Ecology Coordinating Board of the Puget Sound Partnership.

Kordonowy, Mayor of Bainbridge Island and Kevin Ranker, San Juan County Council member, as co-chairs. Ranker later resigned and ran successfully for state legislature. Joe Ryan, the staff director selected to oversee salmon recovery implementation had been on the Recovery Council for several years. The executive director of the PSP had been a consultant to the Shared Strategy at various points.

Also important to continuity was the initial recruitment of local leaders to the Development Committee/Recovery Council who could help with planning and later with implementation. Their work with the Shared Strategy would help them gain respect with their own constituencies and strengthen their institutions if the effort were to succeed. Many leaders, including some county commissioners, tribal leaders, farm leaders, and agency officials, described receiving criticism initially for getting involved.

17. Maintain a top-down, bottom-up approach

Some have characterized the Shared Strategy as a bottom-up or grassroots approach, which it was in many ways. But the regional structure provided strategic direction, an integrating mechanism for policy and significant support and direction to the local work in the watersheds, which affected the relative quality, consistency and timing of the plans and provided an infrastructure that could facilitate later implementation. The latter aspects were more top-down in nature. This combination of approaches has been referred to as a “top-down, bottom-up approach.”

A more common approach in progressive organizations is to rely on top management to set a strategic direction, often with input from the front lines or from customers and constituents; the specific implementation is left to local subsidiaries or offices, with oversight from top management.¹³⁰ But if the goal is to create a system that can ultimately rely on local action and local relationships, the balance of top-down and bottom-up tools is important.

As previously discussed, the top-down elements included establishing a governance structure that included representation from the full range of stakeholders, imposing some deadlines, providing a process to establish science-based goals, brokering the scientific input and review, ensuring policy review, helping to establish representation in the local watershed groups, developing political and financial strategies for the system, and strategic planning for the implementation phase. Bottom-up aspects included input on policy and process from the watershed leads and later the Watershed Leads group, relying on watershed groups for plan

¹³⁰ For one description of top-down/bottom-up balance, see Ellen Schall, “Notes from a Reflective Practitioner of Innovation”, in Innovation in American Government: Challenges, Opportunities, and Dilemmas (Alan A. Altshuler and Robert D. Behn, eds.; Brookings Institution Press, 1997 <http://govleaders.org/schall.htm> (Accessed 8/15/09)

development, and local input through the Development Committee. In addition, the entire process came about as a result of a broadly attended conference and an agreement that emerged with consent.

One example of top-down, bottom-up action was the initial development of the TRT's guidance for watershed plans. The TRT initially provided a (top –down) template that was not well understood or well received. Feedback came up the chain, and the template was revised. The top-down part consisted of identifying the need and developing an idea in response. Bottom-up feedback resulted in changes to the form and content.

*18. Understand the political realities but avoid **destabilizing or policy-diluting** politics*

To create a credible, effective, and scientifically supportable plan, the Shared Strategy effort had to be as free from politics as possible. On the other hand, to be effective, the plan had to be developed in a political context, with support, participation, and funding from elected officials.

The Shared Strategy seems to have followed several rules to keep out inappropriate politics. First, elected leaders were included and treated with respect, and efforts were made to avoid exacerbating the political challenges they would face. Second, the governance system was transparent and included strong leaders from all constituencies who would hold the system accountable for performance. Third, the use of scientific standards and science review and designation of NOAA as the final approver also reduced the impact of politics. Fourth, the Shared Strategy staff's extensive experience working in the political realm led them to take into account potential political reactions and consequences. (In a related matter, Governor Locke, in appointing Ruckelshaus to chair the SRF Board, reportedly laid down one condition—that politics would not enter into decisions about funding projects brought to the board. This story was recounted by many, including Ruckelshaus, and came to symbolize the Shared Strategy's mandate to keep inappropriate politics out.)

It also helped that the staff and the Policy Work Group (most of whose members worked directly for an elected or appointed leader) could speak candidly in many quarters about potential political reactions and look for ways to mitigate those without sacrificing important policy progress or moving forward in ways that would not create unmanageable political reactions. The ultimate aim was good policy that would not be stopped by undue political reactions or considerations. This often required learning about local politics or about past conflicts over certain issues. Overall, the level of transparency and accountability, particularly the collection of strong and credible leaders, created a bulwark against backroom deals. Of course, at a certain level, political considerations must figure into policy results since policy and funding decisions are made through a political process, and local actions that will have to be taken will have to deal with local politics.

A mix of Democrats, Republicans, liberals, and conservatives was evident at every level. In many communities or forums that had been more typically populated by environmental groups and others with more “liberal” tendencies, the addition of farm leaders or real estate or other business interests often brought a change to the previous mix. In other communities, tribes and environmentalists were added to tables where they had been less visible. After initial posturing in some instances, most groups reportedly began focusing more on goals and less on political differences. The interim projects that led to recovery progress, such as improved habitat, done in ways which also protected farmers’ interests helped to show how solutions that overcame rhetorical or partisan views could be developed.

Conclusion

Our research, including extensive interviews with Shared Strategy participants, leaders, and interested observers, and critics indicates that the Shared Strategy has significantly increased the Puget Sound region’s capacity to address the issue of recovering endangered salmon species. Both in its approach and in its institutional features, it was able to address and largely overcome many key obstacles and conflicts that had stood in the way of previous salmon recovery efforts.

These relationships and approaches provide real possibilities for implementation, and for adjustment of plans, and can perhaps be used or adapted in addressing other issues of a regional nature that depend upon local actions. The ongoing forums for implementation, and for continued policy development, are entirely the product of the approach and work of Shared Strategy. These work well, have the trust of a wide majority of interested and affected parties, and have taken a previously uncoordinated and conflicted set of activities and aspirations and placed them in a structure and with a policy framework that has the capacity to improve and adjust. The recognition that the work was not ended at plan acceptance, but that the relationships and mechanisms had to translate to implementation and ongoing policy work was fundamental, and that has been achieved in large measure. This ongoing aspect allows the system to learn and improve, as it must—as both supporters and critics point out. Whether or not it will be enough, remains to be seen, but the results are certainly significant, particularly considering the state of conflict and the inability to make progress prior to the organization and work of the Shared Strategy system.

The Shared Strategy has bequeathed to the Puget Sound Partnership a strong foundation of collaborative processes and relationships, coordinating structures, and other infrastructure that will help serve the PSP and the local watersheds during the implementation phase and as aspects of the regional recovery plan are further refined. While both participants and observers recognize gaps and areas needing attention, and have questions and concerns about meeting the remaining challenges, there is widespread agreement, with which this report concurs, that a substantial and valuable infrastructure for implementation and further policy development has been put in place. This occurred because of leadership and careful thought exercised at many

levels, using classic conflict resolution practices, adding, in new combinations, known means of conflict resolution and structures, and developing new ones to meet these challenges.

The Shared Strategy is notable for its innovative combination and development of tools, approaches, and guiding principles, which can be of value to policy makers and leaders when addressing other complex resource management issues that involve diverse economic and environmental interests, multiple levels and jurisdictions of government as well as private and nonprofit parties and longstanding antagonisms. It is our hope that this early-stage examination of the Shared Strategy will serve not only as a historical record of the effort but also as a resource that can inform future efforts and contribute to their success.

Appendices

Appendix A—Diagram: Entities with Impact on Salmon

Appendix B—Summary of Key Events Affecting and Reflecting the Establishment of the Shared Strategy

Appendix C—Port Ludlow II Letter to Supporters and Summary of Shared Strategy Organization and Process

Appendix D—A Shared Strategy for Puget Sound, October 2000

Appendix E—“Who’s Who in the Shared Strategy” and Shared Strategy Structure

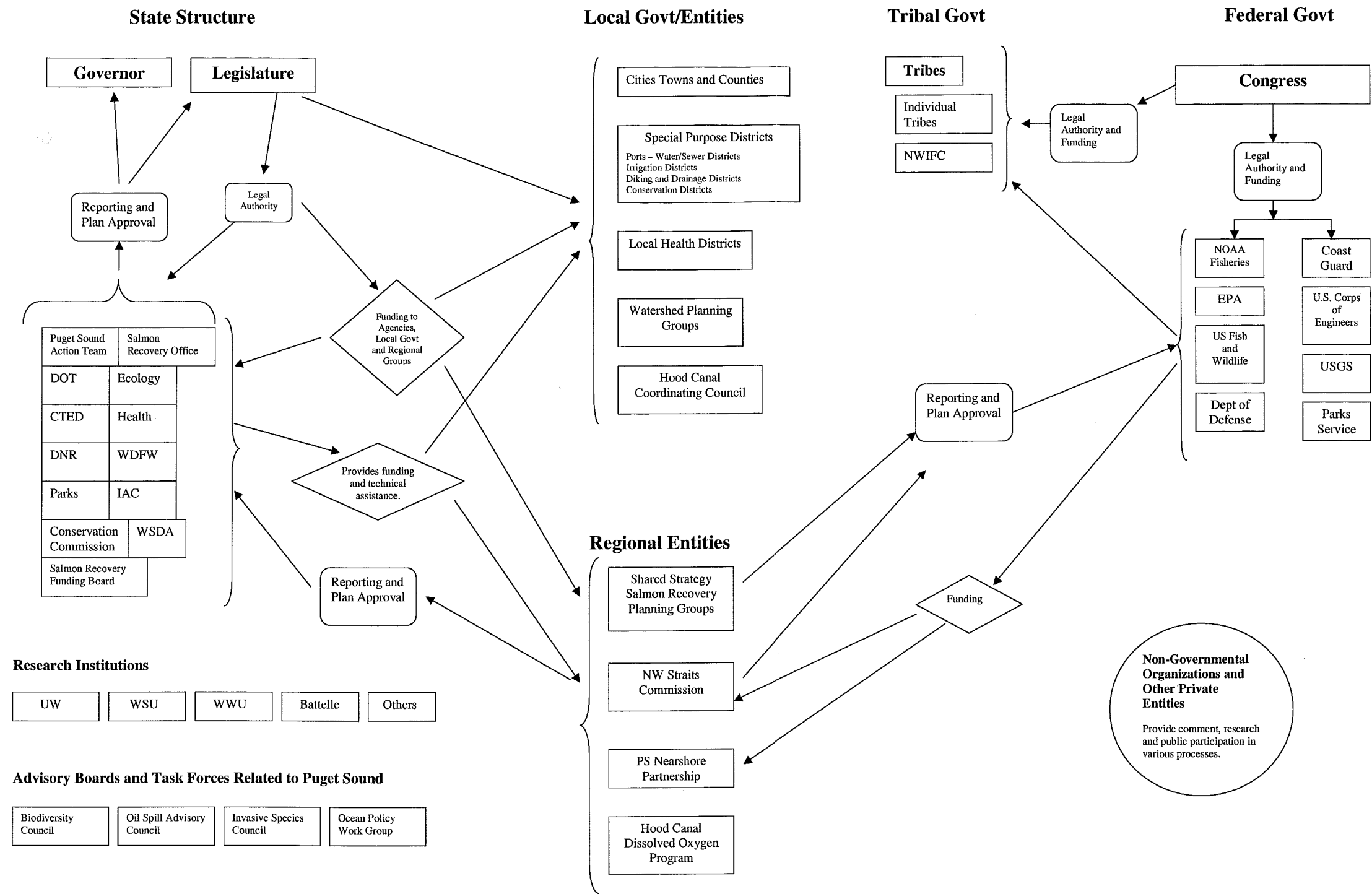
Appendix F—Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Planning Areas

Appendix G—Washington Salmon Recovery Areas

Appendix A

Diagram: Entities with Impact on Salmon

CURRENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE IN PUGET SOUND*



Appendix B

**Summary of Key Events Affecting & Reflecting the
Establishment of the Shared Strategy**

Summary of Key Events Affecting and Reflecting the Establishment of the Shared Strategy

1987: Nisqually River Council formed as a locally-based management partnership of state and local governments, business, and individuals working to protect the health of the Nisqually River.

September 1997: Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce Leadership Meeting. Discussed what ESA is, the state of the science, and what an ESA salmon listing would mean for the region and the economy.

1998: William Ruckelshaus created an informal Business and Environment Committee to look for common ground on salmon issues and spur involvement of the governor's office. The committee met throughout the year.

1998: The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GRSO) established.

1998: Tri-County Salmon Recovery Effort response formed. Effort brought together local governments, environmental groups, and businesses in Snohomish, King, and Pierce counties to address the habitat-related factors of salmon decline.

March 24, 1999: Puget Sound Chinook listed as a threatened species by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

October 1999: First region-wide salmon meeting—the Puget Sound Salmon Leaders' Forum (later known as the Port Ludlow I meeting) held. Meeting chaired by Ruckelshaus and Dan Evans. The meeting represented a broadening of the Puget Sound salmon recovery effort and a call to action for different interests to work together toward a common goal.

Fall 1999: Informal Policy Work Group (composed of agency staff) meetings begin. The group was brought together by Ruckelshaus after the Port Ludlow I meeting.

April 2000: NOAA Fisheries Service convened the Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team (TRT).

Late 1999 to 2001: Policy Work Group composed of diverse local, state, federal, and tribal officials, along with members of the business community, met to develop a draft document articulating a vision for a collaborative effort and a new approach in a document titled "Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound."

January 2001: Port Ludlow II meeting held; a draft of the Shared Strategy proposal was signed by the Policy Work Group's steering committee. The working group agreed to create a nonprofit entity, the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound, to coordinate a collaborative region-wide approach to salmon recovery.

January 2001 to April 2002: Recruitment of nonprofit board of directors.

April–May 2002: Shared Strategy for Puget Sound was registered as a nonprofit; staff were hired and began working in May. Tri-county effort officially ended and became part of the Shared Strategy effort.

November 2002: November benchmark meeting held where watersheds were asked to report on six questions. The answers to these questions revealed that watersheds needed more technical assistance. Therefore, Shared Strategy for Puget Sound began meeting with TRT.

Early 2003: TRT liaisons began meeting regularly with watersheds.

2003: Snohomish River basin selected for a \$150,000 pilot grant program, the Community Salmon Fund, through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). The pilot program was for small-scale salmon habitat restoration projects.

May 2003: The Skagit watershed withdrew from the Shared Strategy process.

January 2003: Salmon Summit I convened to engage stakeholder groups and those working in watersheds.

February 2003: TRT published a technical guidance document and began meeting with watersheds to explain the guidance.

April 2003: Development Committee (later known as the Recovery Council) retreat.

2003: Decision made to not include Bull Trout in the Shared Strategy.

June 2004: Thirteen of 14 watersheds submitted plans for review. Skagit did not submit a plan. Technical review of each watershed plan began. Additional funding from SRFB received.

January 2005: Salmon Summit II convened to bring together stakeholders and present the regional strategy. Information gathered at this conference and papers written about various salmon recovery issues provided a basis for Volume 1 of the final regional salmon recovery plan.

June 2005: Internal Shared Strategy for Puget Sound deadline for watersheds to submit final recovery plans. All 14 watersheds, including Skagit, submitted a plan. Watershed Implementation Leads group began to meet regularly as a formal part of the governance and policy making mechanism.

July–August 2005: TRT and policy review of the 14 submitted recovery plans. The results section of the final regional salmon recovery plan written.

December 27, 2005: The Shared Strategy Plan and National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) Draft Supplement were offered for public comment.

February 2006: Public hearings and comment period on NMFS Draft Supplement.

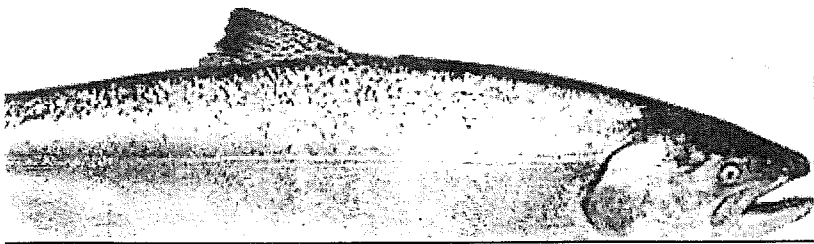
November 2006: NMFS Final Supplement published. Together, the NMFS Final Supplement and the Shared Strategy plan constitute the ESA Recovery Plan for Puget Sound Chinook Salmon. Development Committee changed its name to the Recovery Council.

2007: Puget Sound Partnership was created as a state agency by Governor Gregoire and the Washington State Legislature to protect and restore the Puget Sound.

Fall 2007: The primary roles and responsibilities of Shared Strategy for Puget Sound were subsumed into the Puget Sound Partnership.

Appendix C

**Port Ludlow II Letter to Supporters and Summary of Shared
Strategy Organization & Process**



Puget Sound Salmon Recovery

a shared strategy

October 20, 2000

To People Working to Save Salmon in Puget Sound:

Wild salmon and bull trout are in trouble in the Puget Sound region. Populations are a small fraction of what they once were and some are nearing extinction. While the needs of the fish are straightforward – an adequate supply of clean water, properly functioning spawning and rearing habitat, and a sufficient number of adult salmon returning to spawn – providing these basic requirements is perhaps one of the most challenging environmental problems ever faced in the Pacific Northwest.

In the fall of 1999, over 150 private sector and local, state, federal and tribal government leaders gathered to discuss the growing salmon crisis. These private and public sector leaders identified a common vision for Puget Sound salmon: healthy Puget Sound ecosystems to produce and support salmon at a level that will once again sustain ceremonial, subsistence, and commercial fisheries. But these salmon leaders also determined that without a Shared Strategy, without a common road map to lead the region, the means to recover and protect wild salmon and their habitats will be inefficient at best, ineffective at worst.

A group of federal, state, local, and tribal leaders answered the call for a shared strategy by developing the enclosed draft *Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound*. Structured around six planning steps to establish recovery goals and actions necessary to achieve them, the Strategy incorporates the need for local decision-making with Puget Sound-wide standards and planning. With the leadership and partnership of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, state agencies, the Governor's Office, local governments, and Puget Sound Indian tribes, the Strategy aims to fulfill the region's obligations under the Endangered Species Act and be consistent with treaty rights.

We seek your comments, questions, and support to make the draft Shared Strategy *the* strategy for returning healthy wild salmon runs to Puget Sound. We need your help in ensuring the Shared Strategy provides a workable framework and process for collaborative recovery planning. While we invite and encourage feedback on the entire draft document, we are particularly interested in how we can improve the clarity of the planning steps and the feasibility of the timelines.

Based on your comments, we will revise the draft document and gather salmon leaders in January to finalize the Shared Strategy and launch the effort. A steering committee is being formed to propose an organizational structure for the Shared Strategy process and to organize the January gathering.

Please provide us with your comments on the Shared Strategy by December 1, 2000. There is a comment form included with this packet that you can fill out and return to the address listed on the form. *You may also direct your comments and questions to Gail Gatton (206. 447.1805) or Jim Kramer (206. 706.7289). Additionally, the document is posted to our website at <http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org> which includes an electronic method for sending your comments, should you so choose.*

Please also feel free to direct your questions to members of the workgroup that supported our effort to prepare the draft strategy. These members include: Teresa Scott, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Jeff Chan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Charles Stringer, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission; Steve Leider, Governor's Salmon Office; Lloyd Moody, Governor's Salmon Office; Steve Nicholas, King County; Jay Watson, Hood Canal Coordinating Council; Elizabeth Babcock, NMFS; and Mary Ruckelshaus, NMFS.

Thank you for your time and efforts to make the Shared Strategy succeed.

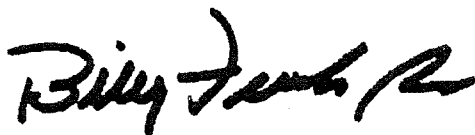
Sincerely



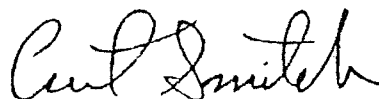
Bill Ruckelshaus, Chair
Shared Strategy Effort



Donna Darm, Acting Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service



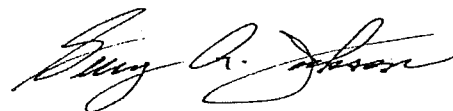
Billy Frank, Jr., Chairman
Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission



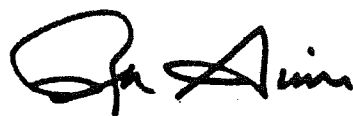
Curt Smitch, Special Assistant to the Governor
for Natural Resources
Governor's Executive Policy Office



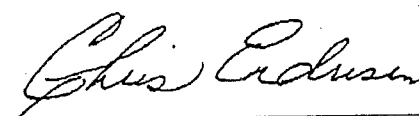
Jeff Koenings, Director
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Gerry Jackson, Manager
Western Washington Office
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Ron Sims, Executive
King County



Chris Endresen, Commissioner
Kitsap County

DRAFT — Shared Strategy Organization — DRAFT

Goal: Create an organization capable of supporting implementation of the regional recovery effort advocated through the Shared Strategy.

The Shared Strategy represents an ambitious effort on an aggressive timeline. In order to successfully implement the Shared Strategy, it will be critical to have strong leadership, broad-based support, and adequate funding for those regional efforts needed to support the Strategy. An ad hoc steering committee, representing the diversity of groups working on salmon recovery, helped identify some of the key functions that such a regional organization will likely need to perform. These are outlined below and then followed by descriptions of how the work could be carried out and how such an entity might be organized initially.

1. Link existing federal, state, and tribal programs at the regional level

Many programs are key to recovery efforts and each program includes initiatives (e.g., Critical Area Ordinances) and on-going activities (e.g., watershed planning under 2514) that must be coordinated to insure timely actions that are integrated at both the watershed and regional level. Managers of these programs need to understand, support, and participate in the objectives of the Shared Strategy in order to synchronize products and schedules. Activities to be carried out by the organization include:

- Indicate programs and identify incentives for coordination of recovery efforts;
- Identify conflicting schedules and product demands;
- Recommend necessary policy changes to ensure linkage and coordination; and
- Assist in identification of existing resources and potential re-direction of resources.

Activities that will need to be carried out by the managers of these programs include:

- Address identified issues;
- Adjust schedules and product demands;
- Support and implement necessary policy changes; and
- Support and manage the re-direction of existing resources.

Next Step: Identify the existing programs for which coordination in the near-term is most critical in order to enable local and regional efforts consistent with the desired outcomes of the Shared Strategy.

2. Foster participation of watershed groups and local jurisdictions

The second key function of the organization is to provide support for recovery activities by watershed groups and local jurisdictions. One of the primary assumptions of the Shared Strategy is that work in the watersheds across Puget Sound will serve as a fundamental building block for a recovery plan and its successful implementation. A process is already underway to identify goals for each watershed. The role of the watershed groups and local jurisdictions will be to work with these goals to determine how to make them a reality and how they may need to be adjusted to address issues. There are currently groups or organizations working on watershed concerns across Puget Sound. Few, if any of these groups, have the full capacity or mission to be a focal point for all recovery in their area and provide a forum to facilitate discussions on habitat, harvest, and hatcheries. During the next few months it will be essential that existing groups discuss this role and decide if they are able to serve as the focal point in their area. Groups and local governments currently working on HB 2496 and HB 2514 will be important to engage as soon as possible.

Activities for the organization include:

- Provide a forum where watersheds can raise and resolve issues with federal and state levels of government;
- Provide technical guidance and support to watersheds (and requesting local governments);
- Build mechanisms to track activities related to the Shared Strategy in each watershed; and
- Advocate for funding necessary to carry out recovery efforts.

Activities for watershed groups and local jurisdictions:

- Become familiar with the Shared Strategy;
- Decide how their existing efforts could be folded into the work of the Shared Strategy; and
- Decide if they are able to be the focal point for their area.

Next Step:

- Members of the Steering Committee (with staff), engage with watershed groups and local jurisdictions to inform them of the Shared Strategy and assess willingness to participate in the process. Develop communication channels to provide both technical and goal information to the local groups and gather information about what is being accomplished to address these goals.

3. Direct the regional effort

The third key function of the organization will be to set the context for recovery across the region and successfully manage the overall evolution of the Shared Strategy into a recovery plan. There will necessarily be a great deal of dialogue and debate around the recovery plan and there is currently no single entity capable of overseeing the regional effort. A new organization must be created that is empowered by those working on recovery at the local and regional level to guide this debate and affirm regional direction and decisions. The main activities include:

- Oversee development of a draft recovery plan;
- Ensure an inclusive effort and transparent decision-making process;
- Provide policy and science analysis in a manner that supports credible decision-making; and
- Identify accountability for necessary commitments.

Next Step:

- Create an organization to manage and build support for the effort (see below).

Creation of the organization

The draft Shared Strategy was developed and agreed to by the various parties with statutory authorities or responsibilities related to the recovery of salmon. This includes representatives from federal, state, tribal, and local government, as well as outside leadership from the private sector. This group of eight, who signed the draft Shared Strategy, could take on the responsibility of being an organizing committee that undertakes the appropriate initial actions necessary to creating a functional organization. The organizing committee would:

- Establish a steering committee to provide overall leadership on the effort;
- Ensure diverse membership on the steering committee;
- Seek endorsement from government and private sector entities for the organization; and
- Initiate funding to enable implementation of the Shared Strategy and to support the needed organization.

This organizing group could then dissolve upon appointment of the steering committee.

Once the steering committee has been created and with support from affected parties (federal, state, tribal, and local governments, private sector businesses, NGOs, and other stakeholders), it could convene and carry out the following duties:

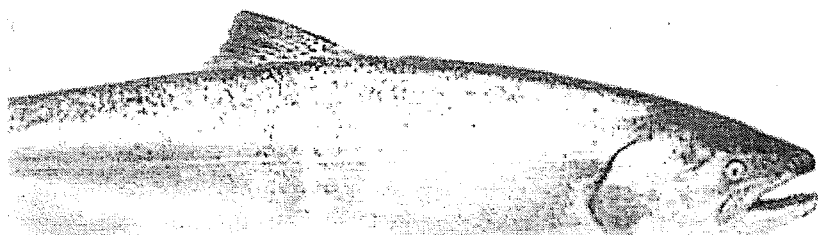
- Host periodic forums where watersheds raise issues and learn what is happening in watersheds across the region;
- Debate recovery options in light of recovery goals;
- Ensure scientific credibility of the recovery plan by working with the federally-designated Technical Recovery Team and the state/tribal co-managers;
- Advocate for necessary policy changes identified through the recovery planning process to promote greater coordination;
- Initiate and advocate for sufficient reliable funding to ensure work associated with Shared Strategy effort and its implementation can be accomplished; and
- Ensure other necessary actions to carry out three main functions listed above.

In order to be broad-based and represent a regional view, the steering committee will probably consist of 40-50 members. This number may prove unwieldy for making decisions and thus may consider appointing an executive committee to oversee the above duties and provide overall managerial direction. At the executive committee level, it would be possible to:

- Oversee the process of implementing the Shared Strategy;
- Synthesize science and policy options in light of fostering achievable options at the watershed level;
- Identify priorities for funding, regulatory approval, technical support, etc.;
- Reach consensus on elements of the recovery plan; and
- Recommend and forward a draft plan for review across the region.

Funding

Funding for the organizational structure should be broad-based and sufficient to support the Strategy successfully. It should perhaps come from both public and private sources (similar to the current effort) to demonstrate the diverse support for this effort. Legislative recognition, at both the federal and state level may be necessary to provide adequate reliable funding.



Puget Sound Salmon Recovery

a shared strategy

Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound:

Response to Comments Received

In late October, 2000, several hundred copies of the *Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound* were distributed to a broad-based group of people working on salmon recovery, including representatives from federal, state, tribal, and local government, private businesses, environmental and other non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders. Comments were sought about the proposed draft plan, particularly around the feasibility and clarity of steps, as well as the appropriateness of the proposed timeline to develop and implement a recovery plan for Puget Sound salmon.

In general, the comments received overwhelmingly endorsed this unique process to prepare a recovery plan for the Puget Sound region. Those responding were enthusiastic about this attempt, which includes the setting of recovery goals that will guide the overall effort, and cited the need to build on existing efforts and coordinate the many ongoing activities related to recovery of salmon in Puget Sound. Many comments pointed out the need to define work products that would result from the steps in the Shared Strategy, clarify tasks associated with the steps, and consider revising the timeline to a more realistic schedule, while at the same time most applauded the idea of an aggressive effort. Most see the Shared Strategy as the way to provide leadership and a forum where we can improve our effectiveness and efficiency in addressing the many issues surrounding recovery.

The comments can be categorized into five main areas — content of a recovery plan, the use of interim goals as recovery targets, coordination across watersheds, how to have accountability in a voluntary effort, and how to take into consideration the cost effectiveness of recovery actions — all of which are addressed briefly below. We plan to refine the Shared Strategy to address these comments after the Port Ludlow workshop in January. Any additional comments received by January 31, 2001, will be taken into account in preparing the next draft of the Shared Strategy.

Defining the contents of a recovery plan

Comments identified the need to be more explicit about what the content of the recovery plan will be and who will accomplish the tasks to develop and implement the plan. Roles and responsibilities need to be more clearly explained. The content of the recovery plan will be developed as part of the first step in the Shared Strategy. An initial draft will be available soon for comment. The draft will prioritize ESA listed species while setting the groundwork for addressing the needs of other salmon species in trouble. By statute, NMFS is required to prepare a recovery plan for listed species. NMFS is committed to using the recovery plan developed through the multi-step process outlined in the Shared Strategy provided it meets ESA requirements and is completed in a timely manner that enables them to meet statutory requirements. The contents of a recovery plan will be defined over the next couple of months along with identifying efforts currently underway that fit into the plan. There will likely be gaps in the existing efforts that are necessary for building the recovery plan and processes will be proposed to fill the gaps. The comments supported defining the contents and substance of the recovery plan upfront in the process so we know what we are trying to produce and it can continually guide the effort.

Recovery goals

Several comments were received regarding the two recovery goal-setting processes that are currently underway, one by the tribal and state co-managers and one by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Specifically, questions were asked regarding how the two sets of goals would be reconciled to achieve a common set of goals for the Puget Sound region and for each watershed. The draft Shared Strategy should be modified to clarify that NMFS and the co-managers will work closely together to ensure that the goal-setting processes are complementary, and that the region and watersheds are presented with goals that are useful for planning purposes. The technical and policy foundations of the goals will be clearly identified, and opportunities for input will be provided to ensure the goals reflect consideration of a broad array of perspectives. The extent to which the goals reflect the de-listing requirements of the Endangered Species Act will also be clearly identified.

The relationship between habitat conditions and fish productivity will be described within recovery goals and it will be important to refine and understand those connections as they are used by watershed groups and local jurisdictions. The implications for actions and analysis at the watershed level to understand and achieve these goals will be addressed.

The initial product from Step Two of the Shared Strategy will be a set of clearly documented interim goals that will be adjusted as we learn more through the recovery planning process. The iterative nature for defining and agreeing on the recovery goals is a key part of the Shared Strategy.

Coordination across watersheds

One of the frustrating points for many involved in salmon recovery efforts is the lack of adequate support and coordination of efforts across watersheds. This situation is precipitated by the need for better consistency in guidance and local demands from existing state programs. There is a panoply of state programs requiring different products on different timelines (e.g., Critical Area Ordinances, Shoreline Guidelines, assessments required under 2514). As a result of this, there are many good efforts at the local level to save salmon but they are not coordinated and often overwhelm local resources. Coordination of these efforts must be improved to provide the ability for local governments and watershed groups to participate in the Shared Strategy. How to coordinate, create some consistency, and build on these efforts, while not creating a new level of bureaucratic requirements is one of the challenges to be addressed. The level of communication and the means to provide it efficiently and effectively will need to be defined.

Accountability

Accountability for actions related to salmon recovery lies with several different government agencies, private businesses, individuals, and watershed groups — ultimately it rests with whoever has jurisdiction and compliance responsibility under laws designed to protect salmon and salmon habitat. For purposes of achieving the overall goals of the region, accountability must rest with any organization or individual that can impact salmon or salmon habitat. It also must rest with federal, state, and local governments charged with enforcing laws to protect salmon and salmon habitat. The success of the Shared Strategy is predicated in part on watershed groups and local jurisdictions accepting the responsibility to help find workable solutions that will protect and restore salmon habitat. Questions were raised in the comments about what happens if local watershed groups are unable or unwilling to accept this responsibility. Who will evaluate the quality of the product emerging from the local watersheds and assess the appropriateness of the group performing the work were other questions. Incentives and disincentives for participation in the Shared Strategy should be more clearly defined so that groups are willing to accept these roles and responsibilities and understand the accompanying expectations.

Cost Effectiveness

The issue here is how to assess the cost effectiveness of recovery actions and choose actions that will provide the results that are conscious of cost. There is a wide gap between the information available to

help quantify the benefits of environmental actions and a comparison of the costs for actions.. This is a gap that must be filled by some work at the regional level to help evaluate the choices at all levels.

Next Steps

The next discussion of the Shared Strategy will take place at Port Ludlow on January 17-19, 2001. Based on recommendations at Port Ludlow and any other comments received by January 31, 2001, a revised version of the strategy will be prepared and circulated. Besides addressing the above five issues, the revised Strategy will: 1) Identify incentives/disincentives for participation; 2) Define work products expected through each step; 3) Clarify multiple tasks within certain steps; and 4) Identify the timeline for implementation that accounts for current efforts and the process for reaching agreement.

Appendix D

A Shared Strategy for Puget Sound, October 2000

A Shared Strategy For Recovery of Salmon In Puget Sound

— D R A F T —

October 17, 2000

This “Shared Strategy” is a proposal to people working to save salmon in the Puget Sound region on how to combine our efforts and enhance our ability to be successful. It was developed following a meeting at Port Ludlow in the fall of 1999 of over 150 salmon leaders from throughout Puget Sound. At the Port Ludlow meeting a group representing tribes, federal, state, and local government agreed to develop this draft Shared Strategy to facilitate a coordinated regional approach to salmon recovery.

The proposed strategy is to:

- Develop a collaborative Recovery Plan in two years that meets our broad interests for salmon in Puget Sound.
- Establish an organizational structure to link recovery efforts, complete a recovery plan, and guide its implementation.
- Identify and support important ongoing near-term efforts to protect Puget Sound salmon.

We propose to convene a meeting of salmon leaders in January 2001 to discuss and finalize a Shared Strategy. Prior to January, a broad-based steering committee is being formed to develop a charter and structure for the next two years. The Strategy needs your suggestions, improvements, and support to be successful. Please direct your comments and questions to Gail Gatton at (206) 447-1805 or Jim Kramer at (206) 706-7289. You can also comment directly via a form on our website at <http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org>.

INTRODUCTION

Federal, tribal, state, and local leaders are not new to the salmon crisis. Over the past two decades, in response to dwindling populations and a commitment to sustainable fisheries, treaty Indian tribes and Washington state have worked together to reduce harvest of Puget Sound salmon by as much as 90 percent. Local governments have also made strides to protect salmon through land use, storm water, and growth management authorities. More recently, spurred by the ESA listings and new legal requirements, local governments have begun to work with other stakeholders in their watersheds to develop comprehensive strategies that meet the needs of people and salmon. Several large landowners and industry sectors are also stepping forward to pioneer better ways to achieve business objectives while protecting and restoring salmon habitat. But as the complexity and number of processes increase, as more and more levels of government and private landowners launch salmon related initiatives, recovery efforts are missing important opportunities for collaboration and increased efficiency, risking redundancy, confusion and erosion of public support.

Puget Sound salmon recovery leaders believe that a strategy is needed to link together our individual efforts to protect and restore salmon runs. Any strategy to link Puget Sound salmon recovery efforts must be guided by clear and specific goals. The Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDF&W) and the Puget Sound tribes, as co-managers of salmon fisheries, are working to establish goals for all Puget Sound salmon. At the same time, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has initiated a process to set goals for those Puget Sound salmon runs currently listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This Shared Strategy integrates federal and co-manager goal setting processes.

A successful Shared Strategy must also establish a collaborative process to identify the best means to achieve recovery goals once established. The Strategy does this by ensuring that local governments, watershed groups, and private sector representatives work together with co-managers and federal agencies to develop a recovery plan for Puget Sound. While the Shared Strategy does not diminish federal agencies, tribes, and state authorities to establish recovery goals for the Puget Sound, it links local governments, watershed groups, and others to the critical process of identifying how to achieve these goals. By establishing a forum to discuss on-the-ground watershed efforts and important policy initiatives, the Strategy helps move us together along the same road to recovery.

NMFS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are responsible for developing a recovery plan for ESA-listed Puget Sound salmon and bull trout, respectively. NMFS and USFWS are also federal trustees for Indian tribal salmonid resources. The Services believe the Shared Strategy is both an effective process for developing a recovery plan and an efficient means to involve those essential to its success. They are committed to participating as full partners so long as the ESA is satisfied and the process and its results are consistent with treaty rights and the federal trust responsibility to tribes. As co-managers, treaty Indian tribes are committed to the return of salmon stocks to a level that meets treaty rights.

The relationship between federal, tribal, and state resource managers is complex. So too is the relationship between Indian treaty rights and the state and federal laws designed to protect and recover salmon. The exact parameters of these relationships have not been clearly defined in all instances. Notwithstanding these areas of uncertainty, participating tribes, the state, the federal agencies and others in the Puget Sound region are committed to working together to protect and enhance salmon runs. At the same time, each participant in the Shared Strategy understands that this collaborative effort is not intended to diminish, expand, or define the rights of any participant. The tribes, as well as the other parties, reserve the right to seek different or additional measures viewed as necessary to carry out treaty promises and/or effect compliance with other state or federal laws.

The proposed Strategy focuses on the Puget Sound basin, its individual watersheds, and groups of Puget Sound fish whose genetic, ecological, and life histories distinguish them from other groups within their species. The initial goal setting process of the Strategy focuses on Puget Sound species listed under the Endangered Species Act: Puget Sound chinook, Hood Canal summer chum and bull trout. Other Puget Sound salmon species are in trouble, and the Shared Strategy will work to promote the continued health and recovery of these species and to avoid further ESA listings. It will address broad biological and social needs by supporting an ecosystem-based approach to salmon recovery, an approach that addresses the needs of salmon and people through protections and improvements to the land and water we need to survive.

To achieve the region's overall goal of self-sustaining harvestable Puget Sound salmon, the Shared Strategy sets forth: (1) a step-by-step approach to establishing recovery goals and identifying actions to achieve those goals through a comprehensive recovery plan; (2) a means to help guide near term actions to protect salmon while the recovery plan is under development; and (3) an initial structure to start the Shared Strategy effort.

REGIONAL RECOVERY PLANNING: SETTING GOALS, IDENTIFYING ACTIONS, AND MAKING COMMITMENTS TO ACHIEVE THEM

The primary intent of the Shared Strategy is to establish a collaborative process for developing a recovery plan for Puget Sound salmon that achieves the following objectives:

- The recovery and maintenance of an abundance of naturally spawning salmon at self-sustaining, harvestable levels;
- The broad distribution of naturally spawning salmon across the Puget Sound region; and
- Genetic diversity of salmon at levels consistent with natural evolutionary patterns.

To be useful, these broad objectives must be translated into specific goals for each watershed and for the Puget Sound basin. In addition, we must gain a more complete understanding of how salmon interact with their habitats and the impact of humans on this relationship. This requires an ongoing scientific endeavor that will reduce – but not resolve – uncertainty in planning for recovery. The recovery plan must be conservatively drawn in favor of protecting fish while embracing an adaptive management approach to ensure it improves with growing knowledge and experience. The plan must also provide predictability and consistency, and reflect an understanding of what is socially and economically supportable.

Outlined below is a process to build and implement a recovery plan for Puget Sound salmon over the next two years. Each step includes a series of technical and policy issues that must be addressed along the way. Effective communication is essential, as each step in the process will require the interaction between science and policy, and new groups and structures for dialogue will have to be created to support the work in the most efficient manner. While the steps are linear and will incrementally build the decisions necessary for the ultimate recovery plan, there must be continuous interplay between local watershed and regional Puget Sound-wide focus. A number of the activities for each step will continue into the future, and it will be necessary to use new information to improve the process as it unfolds.

Step 1: Clarify Roles and Responsibilities, Identify the Content of a Recovery Plan, and Begin to Connect Multiple Planning Efforts. There are several important salmon-related planning activities occurring in the region, including watershed habitat planning, water resource planning, hatchery reform, harvest management, Tri-County ESA and Hood Canal Coordinating Council planning, Puget Sound Technical Review Team, and bull trout recovery. The first step in developing a recovery plan for Puget Sound salmon is to outline the essential elements of the plan, identify our various roles and responsibilities in producing the plan elements, and connect ongoing recovery efforts clearly and explicitly so that all the pieces fit well together.

A group of technical and policy experts representing various ongoing activities will be convened to accomplish this task. At a minimum, this step must involve the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Washington, Puget Sound tribes, local governments, and watershed councils. The work under this step can be accomplished in late Fall 2000. This coordination task will result in an understanding of what each planning effort will contribute to a comprehensive recovery plan, if there are gaps and how to fill them, and the geographic boundaries we will use to set specific goals for individual salmon populations.

Step 2: Identify Recovery Goals for Each Watershed. Recovery goals are being developed for all watersheds in Puget Sound through the combined efforts of the tribal and state co-managers, and, for ESA-listed species, by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This combined effort will establish initial recovery goals for species listed under the ESA. With input from local and regional technical efforts, it will involve estimating historic and current characteristics of salmon populations in Puget Sound watersheds, will provide a technical estimate of the abundance, productivity, diversity and spatial distribution necessary to achieve self-sustaining, naturally spawning salmon at harvestable levels. The combined effort in goal setting will also provide a means to link habitat conditions to numbers and diversity of salmon.

The goal setting process will begin with the co-managers establishing interim goals for chinook in most watersheds by November 2000. This will be followed by the completion of the co-managers goal setting for the remainder of Puget Sound watersheds and the merging of these goals with the work of NMFS and USFWS by April 2001. This effort will result in clearly documented recovery goals that address the requirements of the co-managers and federal agencies. Local governments and watershed groups must work with the co-managers and federal agencies to identify critical scientific or policy concerns raised by these goals and collaborate on the next steps in the recovery planning process to finalize them. Through the processes described in the following Steps 3-5, the co-managers and federal agencies may modify these interim recovery goals. Draft recovery goals developed in Step 2 will be based in part on developing connections between habitat conditions and fish productivity; connections that will help us measure the individual and cumulative effects of our actions.

Step 3: Begin to Identify the Actions Necessary to Achieve Recovery Goals. Public and private sector representatives responsible for habitat, hatchery, and harvest activities in each watershed will need to work together, using the recovery goals as targets and identifying the actions necessary to attain them. Early understanding of what is needed and what is attainable will help identify the level of effort necessary to achieve goals for each watershed and for the entire Puget Sound. Most of the work in this step will be done at the watershed level across the programs for habitat, harvest, and hatcheries. In each watershed, existing or newly formed groups will need to assess the potential effects of the goals and identify the actions necessary to achieve them. The Shared Strategy will need to provide a structure to ensure watershed efforts are integrated at the regional level in an effective and efficient manner. This step will conclude with an understanding of where the goals can be easily met and where it will be more difficult to achieve them. It will also improve our understanding of the relationships between numbers of fish and the ability of specific actions to support them through management of habitat, harvest, and hatcheries. This step should be completed by December 2001.

Step 4: Identify Regional Recovery Options. Based on the assessment in Step 3, Step 4 will take a more regional focus and support policy makers and scientists working in harvest, hatcheries, and habitat planning to identify coordinated approaches that facilitate local and regional attainment of the goals. This must include a scientific and policy assessment to determine whether combined efforts will add up to recovery for the Puget Sound. Several options may need to be explored for each watershed and each population to identify the more promising choices of actions needed to obtain the desired goals and what assistance the Puget Sound region is willing to provide local watersheds to meet their specific goals. Consistent with treaty rights, this step will also develop options for addressing any conflicts between harvest, hatchery, and habitat management practices for meeting the goals. The work of this step will need to be accomplished through a Puget Sound forum that does not yet exist and will need to be created as part of the Shared Strategy. There will need to be interplay between the watershed interests and a more regional focus. This step should be completed by September 2002, and result in regional consensus on the best means of supporting watershed and Puget Sound-wide efforts to meet desired goals.

Step 5: Commit to Watershed and Regional Recovery Goals and the Actions Necessary to Achieve Them. The objective of Step 5 is to choose a recovery strategy for Puget Sound from among the options developed in Step 4. Tribal and state co-managers, NMFS, and USFWS will finalize a set of recovery goals consistent with treaty rights and the ESA through collaboration with local governments and watershed groups outlined in Steps 3 and 4. Goals will be finalized at the individual population level and across the Puget Sound. Achieving the combination of population characteristics needed for recovery will involve difficult decisions about habitat, harvest, and hatchery actions. Technical support from the TRT, co-managers, and watershed groups will be necessary to evaluate the anticipated results of actions. The goals and the actions necessary to achieve them will comprise the recovery plan that will guide the region's efforts. All parties responsible for implementing the plan must help define and commit to the actions they are responsible for implementing. This step must result in a firm timeline for implementation and a final set of recommendations in a recovery plan that can be considered for formal adoption by all the necessary parties. This step will be completed by December 2002, at which time the Services will publish the results as a proposed Recovery Plan for listed stocks and proceed with its promulgation of public hearings.

Step 6: Carry out our Commitments, Monitor Results, and Adjust the Strategy. Once the goals and actions to meet them have been established, we must ensure that we follow through on our commitments and produce desired results. Adjustments will have to be made as we implement the recovery plan, and the capacity to monitor and evaluate results at multiple levels of the effort must be built. Monitoring and evaluation programs will be necessary to ensure specific actions are implemented in the right manner and they are achieving the right outcomes for fish. There will also need to be an effective monitoring and evaluation system for each watershed, the marine areas, and the whole region to ensure our collective efforts add up to recovery. The monitoring and evaluation process used in Puget Sound must be consistent with a statewide strategy under development by the Independent Science Panel. We will need to develop the institutional capacity to track results, interpret information, and facilitate adjustments at the watershed and regional level. This step will conclude with a specific program and the commitments necessary to conduct the ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and adjustments necessary for success, and will be concluded in March 2003.

Questions to the reader: Do these steps provide a clear means to develop a recovery plan for the region that will meet the ESA and be consistent with treaty rights? Will the process help you in your responsibilities for salmon recovery?

NEAR TERM ACTIONS TO PROTECT AND RECOVER FISH

While a recovery plan is critical to long-term planning and success, there is no reason to wait for its development to begin recovering Puget Sound salmon. Indeed, many actions are currently underway and others will be taken to reverse some of the more significant harmful impacts on fish. These actions are occurring (or need to occur) in five critical areas: (1) habitat protection and restoration, (2) enforcement, (3) federal rules implementing the ESA, (4) improvements in harvest management practices, and (5) hatchery reform. Over the next two years, actions in these areas must protect and improve the base level of wild populations that now exist and the habitat conditions on which they depend. The strongholds of key habitats and populations in Puget Sound must be immediately secured if we are to be successful in rebuilding salmon populations over the long-term.

A Shared Strategy can help the region in these five areas by identifying where common approaches would facilitate local actions. It can also help coordinate and provide policy and technical support for actions that need to occur across watersheds, and can establish a communications strategy to raise awareness, support, and increasing individual and collective responsibility and stewardship. Resource managers must work across each element of recovery – habitat, harvest, and hatchery management – to ensure their actions are complementary. The Shared Strategy provides a forum to facilitate this coordination.

The Shared Strategy can provide a forum to discuss salmon recovery needs in each of these areas, including how practices could be improved to advance the recovery plan. Where there is common agreement, guidelines will be developed and supported by federal agencies in their implementation of the ESA.

Habitat Protection and Restoration. Local governments are reviewing land use practices that govern impacts to salmon habitats. At the state level, the shorelines management program is being revised to address the use of river, estuarine, and near shore environments. The July 2000 rule issued by NMFS under section 4(d) of the ESA will impact land use. Tri-county and other local governments are working with NMFS to agree on effective practices. A number of hydropower facilities will require license renewal, a process that provides opportunities to improve conditions for fish. Through a Shared Strategy we can inform each other of these and other contemplated changes and develop a better sense of the cumulative results of policy decisions. We can also identify elements of land use better addressed in a comprehensive manner. This region-wide interaction should improve the overall results for fish and people, and will raise awareness of both the positive and negative impacts of land use activities on salmon habitat.

Over the next two years, several hundred projects will be undertaken to preserve and restore important habitats in Puget Sound. If these projects follow a watershed and regional Shared Strategy there is more assurance that critical projects are being approved using the best knowledge of the watershed and the needs of the fish. Regional and state funding organizations like the Salmon Recovery Funding Board should encourage and support watershed and regional priorities that guide project investments across Puget Sound. The Shared Strategy can provide a forum for reaching regional consensus on capital funding priorities.

Harvest Management. Harvest practices need to continue to evolve and be implemented in a manner that is consistent with salmon recovery. Efforts should be undertaken to make harvest management decisions and processes more widely understood and accessible to the general public.

Hatchery Reform. There are over 100 hatchery facilities in Puget Sound, all of which play an important role in support of the sport and commercial fishing economy and in meeting tribal treaty harvest obligations. A hatchery reform process is underway to better understand how hatcheries can help recover and conserve naturally spawning populations and support sustainable fisheries. During the next two years, hatchery facilities will develop plans for achieving the objectives of the reform project.

Enforcement. There are many laws to protect salmon and salmon habitat in Puget Sound. It will be difficult to stimulate more actions from landowners and others unless current laws are implemented fairly and effectively. Enforcement must occur that supports common regional goals and strategies. In addition, there must be regional support for the institutional capacity and funding to do the job. Working together in a Shared Strategy we can identify important enforcement actions and provide support to step-up current efforts.

ESA Implementation. NMFS and USFWS have begun the implementation of ESA rules. These efforts will help focus recovery actions as they pass through the lens of federal law. The federal agencies must

work with the region to establish effective and clear standards and support an orderly process that concentrates efforts in the most important places. This concentration is especially critical during the next two years while we develop a regional recovery plan and public support for it. NMFS and USFWS should develop processes to expedite the approval of actions that do not harm fish. Working in partnership with others in the region, federal agencies can improve their implementation of the ESA by finding ways to facilitate actions that are beneficial to fish and fish habitat.

Questions to the reader: Are these the important near term areas to focus our shared work? Are there others? What can we do to help you be more effective and efficient?

INITIATING THE SHARED STRATEGY: STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

There is no single group or organization by itself capable of achieving salmon recovery in Puget Sound. A regional effort guided by a Shared Strategy for developing and implementing a recovery plan is critical to restoring the fish back to healthy levels. Leadership for the effort must be shared, and must come from many groups and individuals that (1) represent the diversity of interests from both the public and private sectors, (2) efficiently link recovery efforts, and (3) effectively communicate with the general public and the large and growing number of people working to save salmon.

If a Shared Strategy is to be successful, leaders must agree and commit to the substantive outcomes and steps to developing a recovery plan. We also need to create the structure to facilitate its implementation. The next step in our process will be to work with a broad-based steering committee representing the diversity of groups working on salmon recovery. With the help of the steering committee, we will organize a working session of 150 or more people in January 2001 to agree on a strategy and obtain support to carry out its initial stages. Both the steering committee and the participants at the working session would be asked to inform others of the Strategy and bring their input into the discussions. The steering committee will develop a proposal for implementing the Shared Strategy over the next two years.

Questions to the reader: Is this the right approach to initiating the Shared Strategy and gaining broad support to begin the effort? How can it be adjusted to improve understanding and support for the Strategy across the region?

Appendix E

“Who’s Who in the Shared Strategy” and Shared Strategy Structure



WHO'S WHO in the Shared Strategy

The Shared Strategy is a collaborative initiative that includes fourteen watershed salmon recovery planning areas, federal, tribal, state and local governments, and businesses and conservation groups.



Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (Recovery Council)

Sets policy direction for the Shared Strategy process

Bill Ruckelshaus, Chair,
Development Committee and
Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Ron Shultz, Puget Sound Action
Team

Randy Acker, Washington
Department of Natural Resources

Ken Berg, US Fish and Wildlife
Service

Bill Blake, SIRC Stillaguamish
(watershed); alternate: Pat
Stevenson

Elin Miller, EPA Region 10; alternate:
Tom Eaton

Barbara Cairns, Long Live the Kings

Steve Tharinger, Elwha/
Dungeness/Strait (watershed);
alternate #1: Scott Chitwood;
alternate #2: Doug Morill

Don Davidson, Lake Washington/
Cedar/Sammamish (watershed);
alternate: Larry Phillips

Debby Hyde, Pro tem, Puyallup/
White & Clover/Chambers
(watershed)

Bob MacLeod, South Puget Sound
Nearshore (watershed); alternate:
Mark Swartout

Bob Kelly, Natural Resources
Director, Nooksack Tribe

Randy Kinley, Lummi Nation;
alternate: tribal member

Jeff Koenings, Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife;
alternate #1: Bob Everitt; alternate
#2: Sara Laborde

Darlene Kordonowy, East Kitsap;
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Michael McCormick, U.S. Army
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Bob Lohn, NOAA Fisheries;
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David Troutt, Nisqually Tribe;
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Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes;
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Shared Strategy for Puget Sound Board of Directors

*Formal responsibility
for the non-profit
organization*

Honorable **Ralph Munro**,
former Washington Secretary
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Billy Frank, Jr., Chair,
Northwest Indian Fisheries
Commission (NWIFC) — Vice
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Ken Currens, Northwest Indian
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Susan Bishop, NOAA Fisheries

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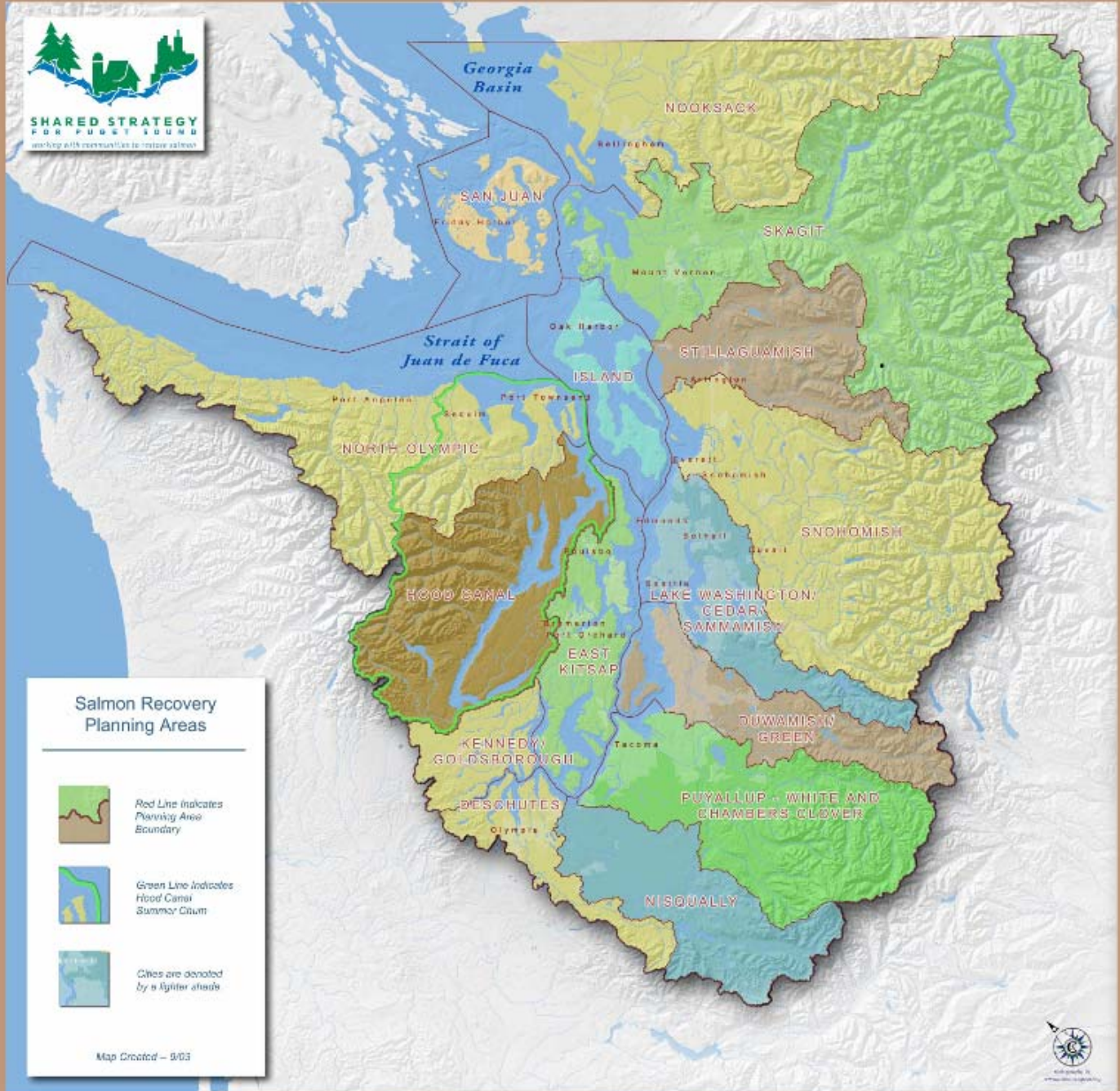


Appendix F

Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Planning Areas

Salmon Recovery Planning Areas

Shared Strategy for Puget Sound



Appendix G

Washington Salmon Recovery Areas

