

**Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Executive Committee Meeting**  
**July 22, 2015, 12:30 – 4:00 pm**  
**Pierce County Environmental Services Building - West Room**  
**9850 64<sup>th</sup> Street West**  
**University Place, WA 98467**

**Executive Committee Members:**

Commissioner Blake, Thurston County  
Jeff Dickson, Squaxin Island Tribe  
Justin Hall, Nisqually River Council  
Executive McCarthy, Pierce County  
Commissioner Neatherlin, Mason County  
David Troutt, Nisqually Tribe

**Additional Attendees:**

John Bolender, Mason Conservation District  
Chris Schutz, Pierce County SWM  
Keri Rooney, Pierce County  
Stephanie Suter, PSP  
Cindy Wilson, Thurston County  
Dan Wrye, Pierce County SWM/ECB  
Representative, South Puget Sound

**Meeting Summary**

**I. AHSS Administrative Updates**

- The Executive Committee approved the May meeting minutes.
- Justin Hall (Nisqually River Council and AHSS Council Co-Chair), provided a summary of the July 14 Council meeting.
- The PSP Leadership Council meets on 7/29 – 7/30. On 7/30, the South Sound Salmon Enhancement Group will take the Leadership Council on a tour of the Edgewater Beach project, which involves removal of 800 feet of bulkhead. The Leadership Council will also tour Mission Creek. Stephanie will forward the tour information to the AHSS Executive Committee.
- EPA and the Strategic Initiative leads (WDOH, WDFW, and ECY) issued a request for experts to participate on the Strategic Initiative Transition Teams. Among other tasks, these teams will determine the solicitation criteria for NTAs in the 2016 Action Agenda for Puget Sound. Elizabeth circulated the e-mail request for Transition Team nominees with the AHSS on 7/10. Alex Smith (Port of Olympia), Scott Steltzner (Squaxin Island Tribe), and Al Schmauder (Chambers-Clover Watershed Council) submitted nominations for the transition teams.

**II. South Sound Ecosystem Pressures**

A South Sound ecosystem pressures assessment is one of two deliverables under the AHSS 2014-2015 workplan. The AHSS Technical Team developed a preliminary list of ecosystem pressures based on existing assessments. The list does not limit AHSS actions and may shift over the next several months as the Strategic Initiative Transition Teams delve into their work.

**Executive Committee Discussion:**

- The South Sound Ecosystem Pressures document is compiled from the ecosystem pressures information in the Lead Entity plans.

- The list of South Sound Ecosystem Pressures is fairly comprehensive; notable exceptions are oil spills, shellfish harvest, and fish harvest.

Executive Committee Decision:

- The Executive Committee approved the South Sound Ecosystem Pressures document as a deliverable to be forwarded to PSP.

### **III. Near Term Action Prioritization**

For the previous round of NTAs, the AHSS Technical Team took its initial list of 200 plus actions and through a series of filters narrowed the list to a more manageable number. AHSS is now planning to develop another list of NTAs for (hopefully) direct funding. The Technical Team will revise its coarse-scale screening into a more refined scoring system. The NTA prioritization memo describes to PSP the AHSS decision-making process around NTA prioritization.

Executive Committee Decision:

- The Executive Committee approved the NTA prioritization memo as a deliverable to be forwarded to PSP.

### **IV. Initial South Sound Focus Areas**

Developing the initial list of South Sound Focus Areas is the first step in a larger planning process. Working from existing documents (i.e., current NTAs, the South Sound Basis document, and the Squaxin Island Tribe's nearshore assessment), the South Sound Technical Team developed a list of 9 focus areas. Next steps in the process include identifying geographic focus areas and monitoring metrics.

Executive Committee Decision:

- The Executive Committee approved moving forward with the initial South Sound Focus Areas.

### **V. Steps Toward a South Sound Recovery Strategy**

The Technical Team's next task is to establish recovery objectives and geographically specific and quantitative targets for the focus areas. This work will involve AHSS member organizations' science staff, and if requested technical contractor support. The work will result in geographically specific, numeric targets that AHSS is committed to pursuing (e.g., improved BI/BI scores, etc.).

Executive Committee Discussion:

- A South Sound recovery plan is a major component of AHSS's legislative initiative. It is important for two reasons: 1. Credibility, to ensure funding is going to the appropriate projects. 2. Project implementers need to see how all of the pieces fit together.
- The South Sound Recovery Strategy will provide information on the unique needs of each watershed – population, topography, ecology, economy. It will provide information on the optimal mix of solutions across the South Sound landscape.
- SRFB has evolved from an even distribution of funds to a more focused distribution to achieve specific needs; AHSS may get to the same place and be required to make some difficult decisions.

- The Nisqually Tribe's priority is implementing its recovery plan for ESA-listed Chinook salmon. 78% of the mainstem Nisqually in good condition but the Chinook are not doing well, so the Tribe is looking at nearshore habitat. AHSS will need to prioritize available funding. The Nisqually Tribe is not automatically opposed to sending resources toward projects that do not directly affect Chinook recovery or delisting.

## **VI. Other Topics of Interest**

1. Elizabeth McManus and Dan Wrye met with US EPA on 7/22 as part of ongoing effort to maintain a working relationship with US EPA regional staff. EPA expressed several needs:

- Ability to demonstrate that the management conference is working.
- Ability to demonstrate that the method by which EPA funding is allocated is not arbitrary.
- Ability to meet tribal treaty obligations as part of recovery plans.
- Ability to demonstrate environmental progress.

Dan and Elizabeth made it clear to US EPA that AHSS will meet or exceed EPA and PSP requirements, and that AHSS's needs are not limited to the contents of the Action Agenda for Puget Sound. Dan and Elizabeth extended an invitation to Region 10 and US EPA national staff to attend AHSS meetings.

2. Dan Wrye met with PSP Legislative Coordinator Jeff Parsons to discuss Puget Sound legislation during the 2016 legislative session (short). Jeff is interested in attending an upcoming AHSS Executive Committee meeting to discuss the proposed legislation, which could include items such as: the role of the LIOs in statute, the role of the ECB, and the role of the Salmon Recovery Council.

3. The Executive Committee discussed a possible day-long retreat in late fall. David Troutt and Elizabeth McManus will draft an agenda for the retreat.

4. Proposed federal legislation around the Puget Sound Estuary Program could create an entirely new Puget Sound program office with EPA Region 10, which has positive and negative ramifications.

## **VII. Pierce County Watershed Health Report**

Dan Wrye provided a presentation on the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Pierce County watershed health report card. Dan acknowledged that stormwater permits alone are not adequate to achieve better stream health; however, identifying performance measures and tracking them to stated objectives is beneficial. One of the PSP/ECB failures several years ago was carte blanche support for reissuing stormwater permits without an effectiveness evaluation.

## **VIII. Go-Around**

- David Troutt noted that the Nisqually system is experiencing significant challenges this summer due to low water levels and higher than normal temperatures. Nisqually Tribe is working with other organizations to temporarily revise minimum flow regimes for the remainder of summer and early fall in an attempt to mitigate these challenges.