



BRIEFING REPORT

Preparing for JLARC's 2011 and 2016 Performance Audits of the Puget Sound Partnership

Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee
June 17, 2009

John Woolley, JLARC Staff

Partnership Created to Lead Effort to Restore and Protect Puget Sound



Partnership Created

- In 2007, ESSB 5372 created this state agency, charging it with restoring Puget Sound by [2020](#).
- 70-section bill:
 - Defined organization structure
 - Set six goals and eight objectives for a science-based **Action Agenda**
 - Also includes specific tasks and products
 - Directed JLARC audits in 2011 and 2016

Four Main Components to Partnership's Structure



Organization Structure

- **Leadership Council:** Governor appoints seven to provide leadership and responsibility for functions of the Partnership
- **Executive Director:** Governor appoints
- **Ecosystem Coordination Board:** 27 members to advise/assist Council in carrying out its duties (*Council convenes, representation defined in statute*)
- **Science Panel:** Council appoints nine to provide independent scientific advice/expertise in identifying environmental indicators

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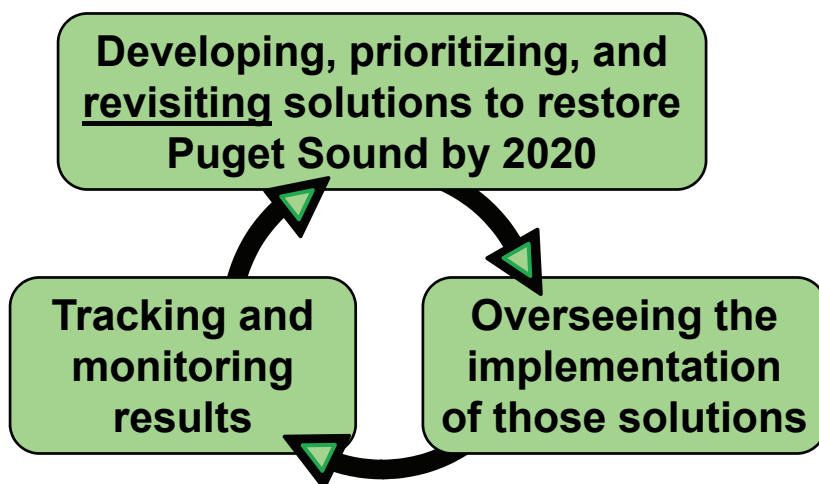
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Partnership's Complex Assignment Summarized Under Three Areas



Summarizing Complex Assignment



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Developing and Prioritizing Solutions: Science-Based *Action Agenda*



Developing/Prioritizing Solutions

- Detailed process for development of science-based Action Agenda included in statute
- “Action Agenda means the comprehensive schedule of projects, programs, and other activities designed to achieve a healthy Puget Sound ecosystem...” (RCW 90.71.010)
 - Implementation strategies to meet statute’s six goals and eight objectives for a healthy Puget Sound by 2020
 - Measurable outcomes, benchmarks, and identification of responsible entities

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Initial Action Agenda Completed in December 2008



Developing/Prioritizing Solutions

- Establishes five priority areas, objectives and actions under these areas, and includes 154 more detailed near-term actions
- Action Agenda’s development a major focus of statute, but only the beginning
- Legislature charged Partnership with overseeing implementation, tracking and monitoring results, and revising Action Agenda
- Statute recognizes the need for **Adaptive Management**

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Adaptive Management –Tracking, Monitoring, and Revising



Overseeing, Tracking, Revising

“...revise the Action Agenda as needed, and revise the implementation strategies every two years using an **adaptive management** process informed by tracking actions and monitoring results in Puget Sound.”

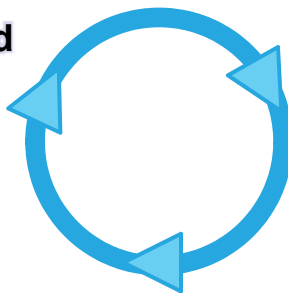
RCW 90.71.310

Adaptive Management Means Recognizing Uncertainty



Overseeing, Tracking, Revising

Monitor and
evaluate
outcomes



Incorporate
what is
learned

Regularly revisit
and revise
objectives

Source: National Academy of Science: *Progress Toward Restoring the Everglades: The Second Biennial Review, 2008*

Entities Implement, Partnership Oversees



Overseeing, Tracking, Revising

- Legislature recognized that various entities would be implementing the Action Agenda (Federal, State, Local, Tribal)
- Charged Partnership with oversight
- Partnership to identify needed funding and review programs funding implementation
- State agencies to work with Partnership to develop criteria that prohibits funding projects in conflict with Action Agenda
- Funding preferences to those with outstanding implementation progress

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Partnership to Track and Monitor Results



Overseeing, Tracking, Revising

- Guide implementation of ongoing Puget Sound assessment and monitoring program
- Establish reporting processes to track funds expended to implement Action Agenda to ensure that funds are achieving intended results
- Science Panel to develop strategic science program that includes a monitoring program with quantifiable performance measures
- Washington State Academy of Sciences to assess restoration progress by Dec. 2010

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Lesson from the Experiences of Other States: Adapt to What Works



Lessons from Others

*“One of the most challenging aspects of large ecosystem restoration is that decisions need to be made despite some **uncertainty** in the supporting science and engineering knowledge base...**plans may need to be adapted**...but it remains to be seen how willing restoration decision makers will be to significantly alter project designs...”*

Source: National Academy of Science: *Progress Toward Restoring the Everglades: The Second Biennial Review, 2008*

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Preparing for JLARC Audits: Focusing on Oversight/Accountability



JLARC's 2011 and 2016 Audits

- Audits' focus less on Action Agenda and more on implementation:
 - ✓ Partnership's oversight
 - ✓ Partnership's tracking and monitoring
 - ✓ Partnership's revision processes
- Asked Partnership to answer a set of questions on oversight and accountability to help us prepare for audits
- Partnership to present and summarize answers

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Partnership's Answers May Serve as Benchmarks for 2011 & 2016 Audits



JLARC's 2011 and 2016 Audits

- Three categories of questions:
 1. **Fiscal:** aligning budgets and expenditures with Action Agenda priorities.
 2. **Organization Structure:** moving Partnership's structure to its oversight and monitoring role.
 3. **Building Accountability Mechanisms:** implementing Action Agenda Priority E.
- *Questions and detailed responses in report.*

Contact Information



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A link to this briefing report can be found on JLARC's homepage:

www.jlarc.leg.wa.gov