



Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Executive Committee Meeting
December 6, 2019, 2:00PM – 3:30PM
Conference Call

Executive Committee Members:

Jeff Dickison, Squaxin Island Tribe
Commissioner Tye Menser, Thurston County
Commissioner Kevin Shutty, Mason County
Derek Young, Pierce County Council
David Troutt, Nisqually Indian Tribe

Additional Attendees:

Evan Bauder, Mason CD
John Bolender, Mason CD
Dan Calvert, PSP
Andy Deffobis, Thurston County
Tom Kantz, Pierce County
Brian McTeague, Squaxin Island Tribe

Facilitation provided by Ross Strategic: Elizabeth McManus and Mary Byrne

Meeting Summary

I. Updates

- ECB voted to endorse the memo and associated actions to elevate the stature of LIOs and provide LIOs with more capacity.
- Freshwater Strategy Update
 - WRIA 14 – Is working with a consultant to update their freshwater strategy. Data since 2002 were compiled to perform existing conditions analysis. This analysis was used to roll up data into key ecological attributes. This information will inform priority data gaps and next steps for the strategy update.
 - WRIA 13 – Is working with a consultant on the scope of work. WRIA is working on gathering and compiling data from the strategy in 2005. In the beginning of 2020, GIS and mapping partners (Squaxin, TRPC, etc.) will collaborate to determine what relevant mapping layers are in place and how they can be augmented through the strategy update.

II. EPA/NEP Funding Model

- Background on EPA/NEP Funding Model: The EPA/NEP funding model was put in place over 4 years ago. In this model, LIOs can direct \$100,000 a year to a project in the action agenda. When the model was first put in place, the Alliance, Coastal Caucus, and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission advocated for a model more aligned with the Salmon Board with a guarantee for local funding (i.e., RCO would hold the funds and there would be designated funding for projects of regional significance, but LIOs would direct most of the funding). This model was rejected by the EPA, with the rationale that this model did not provide enough certainty that important projects would be prioritized for funding.
 - There have been a few concerns with the current funding model:
 - Funds are not distributed equitably across sound (e.g., San Juan Islands routinely get no funding)
 - Oversight costs for state agencies to administer the funding and burden on project sponsors is very high.

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- The EPA is taking comments on what next 5 years for the funding model will look like. Information from EPA signals that EPA is not looking to significantly change the current model. There is a meeting on December 12 in Seattle at the EPA headquarters. The Executive Committee was asked to consider how they would like to approach the meeting and communication to EPA around the funding model.
 - *Discussion:*
 - The briefing at the Salmon Recovery Council also indicated that EPA is not interested in major changes to the current funding model.
 - The Executive Committee indicated there is minimal interest in dedicating significant time to this effort, as AHSS previously dedicated time to this years ago and with little success to show.
 - It was decided that Commissioner Menser would call into the EPA meeting on Dec 12, but no Executive Council member would attend in person. The Executive Committee will share their position via a letter to EPA.
 - Elizabeth McManus will draft a letter for review and approval. Commissioner Shutty would sign on behalf of the Alliance as current Executive Committee chair.
 - It was suggested that in the letter to EPA, the Executive Committee could invite EPA to visit the South Sound to learn more about how the current model isn't accomplishing what we want it to do.

III. GIS Update

Brian McTeague, Squaxin Island Tribe Quantitative Services Manager, provided an update on the GIS updates to the Alliance mapping.

- The main focus of the 2020 Update is to update the various GIS data layers displayed in the Web Map Apps and update the Attribute Summary Tables of the South Sound Strategy with the latest available data.
- Key Additions to the Mappers will be:
 - *Coastal Geologic Services Beach Strategies* (2020) data layers including Prioritized Layers for
 - Sediment Supply
 - Accretion Shoreform Support
 - Forage Fish Spawning
 - the Composite Recommendations 'combined' conglomerate
 - *Canned Queries* for 'Areas of Interest/Focus' which could include;
 - Forage fish
 - Salmonids
 - Armoring / Shorefriendly
 - DriftCells / Shoreforms
 - Embayments
 - Prairies / Oak Woodlands
 - Forests / Riparian / Freshwater
 - Water Quality

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- Shellfish
 - Timeline:
 - AHSS: South Sound Strategy Update (Summary Attributes): January 2020
 - SIT Coastal Catchment Analysis Project Update: January 2020
 - AHSS GIS: January 2020
 - AHSS web maps: January/February 2020
 - Finalizing of Priority Queries: February/March 2020
 - Addition of Priority Queries to web maps: March 2020

IV. NEP Funding Allocation

- Background: Each year, each Puget Sound Local Integrating Organization is given the opportunity to direct \$100,000 in “local” EPA National Estuary Program (NEP) funding. Funding must be directed to a local action included in the Puget Sound Action Agenda and projects must meet additional NEP funding guidelines.
 - Funding is administered through state agency Strategic Initiative Leads. The AHSS project funding recommendation will go to the relevant state agency lead and we expect that the state agency leads will accept local recommendations. (This is how it has worked in the past.) The lead state agency strategic initiative lead will negotiate directly with the project sponsor to create a project contract. Grant funds will be available after January 2020
- Recommendation: The Alliance recommends the Shore Friendly South Sound Initiative, administered by the Pierce Conservation District receive the 2019 AHSS funding. SFSS engages landowners in shoreline stewardship with the goal of preventing and reducing hard armoring on Puget Sound shorelines. If awarded, funding will be divided between the Thurston, Pierce, and Mason Conservation Districts to support continuation of the ongoing Mason County model program and initiation of programs in Thurston and Pierce Counties.
 - Shore Friendly programs link shoreline homeowners to science-based, non-regulatory, professional technical assistance and provide site-specific guidance to help land owners reduce shoreline armor and develop restoration projects to benefit salmon recovery. If awarded, this funding will be focused on providing additional technical assistance visits beyond those currently funded to shoreline landowners in the three counties.
- **Decision:** The Executive Committee came to consensus that Shore Friendly be awarded the 2019 NEP funding.
 - It was suggested that the 2020 process for awarding NEP funding should be a full open, thorough consideration of projects to provide the opportunity for new projects in development to receive funding.

V. Wrap up and Next Steps

The Executive Committee will meet again on March 12. contact Elizabeth McManus (emcmanus@rossstrategic.com) with any questions or agenda suggestions.