STORMWATER WORK GROUP

CHARTER

Formally adopted on December 11, 2008

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Stormwater is a significant stressor affecting the health of the Puget Sound ecosystem. Efficiently and effectively managing stormwater to reduce harm to the ecosystem is a common goal of local, state, tribes and federal governments and agencies, environmental groups, the business community, and the citizens of Puget Sound. A coordinated, integrated approach to quantifying the stormwater problem in Puget Sound and evaluating the effectiveness of our management activities is needed and does not currently exist.

THE STORMWATER WORK GROUP'S PURPOSE

The Stormwater Work Group will develop a sustainable, cooperative monitoring and assessment framework that provides meaningful management data; promotes greater understanding of stormwater and other surface water pollution source issues; and supports a larger, integrated effort to protect and restore the Puget Sound ecosystem by enabling us to know whether or not we are reducing harm caused to Puget Sound by stormwater and other surface water sources.

This monitoring and assessment strategy will be a component of the larger Puget Sound regional monitoring and assessment plan. Desirable attributes of the stormwater monitoring and assessment strategy include:

- It helps advance the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda by providing an integrated monitoring and assessment framework that lets us know we are monitoring the right things to ensure that what is monitored is relevant, valuable, and useful to policy makers and others who are involved in cleaning up Puget Sound, and supports a system of benchmarks that lets us know shows whether our efforts are making a difference in the health of the Puget Sound ecosystem.
- It provides information about whether and to what extent certain management actions reduce the harmful effects of past and future land development on water quality and quantity and on species and habitat.
- It promotes voluntary participation by a broad coalition of people and organizations that support and play a part in improving the health of the Puget Sound.
- It can and will be adopted by the Washington State Department of Ecology for NDPES permits in a manner that is appropriate for the permit holders.

THE STORMWATER WORK GROUP'S OBJECTIVES

The Stormwater Work Group is expected to be a continuing entity that provides ongoing process and strategic information for making relevant management decisions. The Stormwater Work Group is established at its outset with the expectation of delivering these specific products related to developing a stormwater monitoring and assessment strategy:

1. Submit to the Puget Sound Science Panel prior to August 6, 2008 a set of preliminary assessment questions for stormwater and, to the extent possible, associated testable hypotheses and data needs and sources.
2. After the Work Group meeting on December 11th, submit to the Puget Sound Science Panel a work plan and budget for developing a comprehensive stormwater monitoring and assessment strategy.

3. Submit by June 30, 2010 a complete, comprehensive stormwater monitoring and assessment strategy to the Puget Sound Science Panel and the Washington State Department of Ecology.
4. Submit by June 30, 2010 a proposed implementation plan and pilot aspects for the stormwater monitoring and assessment strategy.

In developing these products, the Stormwater Work Group is "test driving" a process. Feedback will be provided to the Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium's Governance Committee and the Puget Sound Partnership about relevant lessons learned during the process.

- The process will result in an integrated monitoring and assessment strategy to evaluate stormwater management efforts, building on an assessment framework used in other regions, and being used to develop the larger monitoring and assessment plan for Puget Sound, to create integrated monitoring and assessment programs across jurisdictions and agencies. The assessment framework approach encourages managers from different agencies to contribute assessment questions based on their own monitoring needs and objectives. Questions are evaluated and prioritized, data gaps are identified, and appropriate monitoring and assessment tools are matched with questions. The process is completed with a monitoring and assessment program that is designed to collect and analyze the data needed to answer the questions.
- The activities and products of the Stormwater Work Group will build upon and be integrated with the activities and products of other work groups.
- The Stormwater Work Group and the monitoring and assessment strategy it produces helps to create a dynamic relationship between policy makers and technical experts so that the results of monitoring – the information generated and the analysis offered – become cornerstones in the policy decisions and management actions that give future generations a healthy Puget Sound ecosystem.
- The products of the Stormwater Work Group will reflect the interests of the Surface Water and Aquatic Habitat Monitoring Advisory Committee's Report and Recommendations to the co-chairs of the Governor's Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health, March 9, 2007:
    - ◊ Facilitate Multi-Party Collaboration: Coordinate and leverage the knowledge, expertise, and resources of local, state, and federal agencies and the private sector to jointly conduct and assess the results of stormwater monitoring. Help regulators and those they regulate work more collaboratively to ensure that monitoring-related regulatory requirements are understood and supported by those who must address them. Create and enhance opportunities for direct communications and connections between policy-makers, the scientific and technical community, and the public about monitoring data and findings.
    - ◊ Integrate Disciplines and Programs: Integrate disciplines such as hydrology, hydraulics, chemistry, biology, toxicology, and geology, and programs such as stormwater, groundwater, and wastewater, that are affected by regulatory acts such as the Endangered Species Act, the Shoreline Management Act, and the Clean Water Act, and other water-related management and regulatory programs and laws.
    - ◊ Improve Policy and Management Decisions: Use the results of regional stormwater monitoring and assessment efforts to improve the quality of policy and management decisions. With these results, provide a common foundation for the shared vision that clearly articulates what we are trying to achieve with monitoring and assessment and why. In addition, develop mutual interests for policy or management decisions that frame and guide scientific/technical discussions and investigations.
    - ◊ Produce Information that is Useful and Readily Accessible: Stormwater monitoring should focus on producing information that is useful, applicable, and comparable. The monitoring and assessment strategy should, therefore, assist in guiding us in making the right decisions about protection and restoration priorities and funding decisions. The

information should be accessible to individual organizations and the public as well as to inter-jurisdictional or public-private initiatives, and should enable us to gain a greater perspective on conditions, causes, and solutions.

- ◊ Achieve Monitoring-Related Mandates: Conduct regional monitoring and assessment to achieve federal and state mandates while addressing the key "big picture" questions about the health of the Puget Sound Basin. Ensure that applicable permit-required monitoring is aligned with the context of and priorities identified by the regional monitoring and assessment framework.
- ◊ Recognize Jurisdictions' Unique Interests and Obligations: As we develop and strengthen collective efforts through regional stormwater monitoring and assessment, recognize that jurisdictions need to address their unique individual interests and obligations and, therefore, need to retain autonomy and authority.
- ◊ Strengthen the Credibility, Trust and Transparency of Monitoring Activities and the Data Generated from Them: Whatever monitoring (including collecting and analyzing data and information) is conducted, it must be credible in the eyes of policy-makers, technical experts, and the public. In addition, the activities undertaken should be performed in a way that enables the stakeholders (e.g., decision-makers and the public) to trust that we are wisely investing resources and making a difference in improving both water quality and the protection and preservation of fish and wildlife habitat. To ensure that the regional stormwater monitoring and assessment program is accountable, credible, and helps build trust, the processes by which it is conducted must be transparent.
- ◊ Develop Consistency in Data Collection and Reporting: Through the stormwater monitoring and assessment strategy, achieve more consistent standards, protocols, practices, and methodologies related to monitoring, analysis, and recording.
- ◊ Ensure Flexibility to Adjust to Changing Needs: Gear projects to the specific issues, problems, and challenges, identifying who needs to be involved to address and resolve them. The organizational structure and decision-making processes of the Stormwater Work Group needs to be flexible to allow for or accommodate changes in scope as the program matures, gains credibility and support, and expands.
- ◊ Cost-Effective and Efficient: By improving coordination, avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, thereby helping to use limited resources as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- ◊ Rely on Incentives to Secure Participation and Funding: Rely on incentives as well as regulations and requirements to ensure that we achieve our vision, interests and goals.

THE STORMWATER WORK GROUP'S STRUCTURE, MEMBERSHIP AND ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

The Stormwater Work Group is an oversight committee that provides an established, recognized process for representation of diverse interests in vetting the products of the Group. Work Group members need to be knowledgeable about stormwater issues and/or relevant monitoring and assessment approaches and must represent their agencies/organizations or caucuses.

A subset of the Work Group members serves as a Steering Committee. Members of the Steering Committee are members of the Work Group that commit additional time and effort to produce products for the Group to review, discuss, refine and approve or adopt.

Multiple Task Groups will be created to develop products on behalf of the Work Group and provide other technical or policy input as needed. The membership of the Task Groups will be established independently for each group and will extend beyond the members of the Work Group. One member of the Work Group should serve on each Task Group as a liaison.

The membership and composition of each of these groups are further defined in the bylaws. All meetings are open to attendance by any interested party, and all materials are posted on the webpage maintained by the Project Manager.