

Case Study

Washington Adopts Collaborative Governance Structure for Salmon Recovery

The Problem

In 1999, federal officials listed Puget Sound Chinook salmon under the Endangered Species Act. Throughout the Sound, 22 populations of Chinook were at “high risk” of extinction and between 11 and 15 populations have already disappeared.

Initiating a Structure for Collaboration

Shared Strategy for Puget Sound was conceived after the ESA listings. The organization and the concept were created by a group of civic leaders including former EPA chief William Ruckelshaus, former Governor Dan Evans, former Washington Secretary of State Ralph Munro, and Indian leader Billy Frank.

Shared Strategy grew out of an informal consensus among these regional leaders that a new collaborative approach was needed for salmon recovery. This is unlike how recovery plans have been written in the past where the federal government makes natural resource decisions and prescribes local actions.

Shared Strategy believes that local stakeholders are in the best position to find lasting solutions for their communities. They provided leadership and a framework for salmon recovery planning that is an

important departure from what has been done in the past. They produced a regional plan developed by hundreds of stakeholders in 14 watersheds extending from Mount Rainier to the Canadian border. Local governments, farmers, tribes, environmentalists and developers — groups that are often on the opposite sides — came together to develop something that would work for them all.



The "shared strategy," a 4,000-page plan, will help restore salmon runs by protecting wetlands and flood plains, retooling hatcheries and dams, and restoring feeding grounds. The plan, which would cost \$ 120 million a year for the next decade, will require changes in development, agriculture, fishing, logging, and just about every other aspect of life in the 14 watersheds. The plan has been adopted as the federal plan.

Once the plan was approved, Shared Strategy began working toward finding a permanent mechanism and funding to support the implementation of the plan.

Permanent Structure for Collaboration Grows Out of the Shared Strategy



Gov. Chris Gregoire signs SB 5372, creating the Puget Sound Partnership, in a ceremony at Des Moines Beach Park

In 2007, Governor Chris Gregoire and the Washington Legislature worked together to enact legislation and provide funding that will help restore and protect Puget Sound. The centerpiece of the initiative is a bill (SB 5372) establishing the Puget Sound Partnership. The Partnership will be a new state agency with cabinet-level status. It will be governed by a Leadership Council made up of seven civic leaders. The Council and its staff will collaborate with governments, tribes, businesses and the environmental community to create and implement an action plan to restore the health of Puget Sound by 2020. This action plan will set measures and priorities to guide all protection and restoration programs in the region.

Shared Strategy achieved its goals of developing a regional salmon recovery strategy, getting it adopted as a federal plan and finding a successor organization to carry out the program. Shared Strategy's staff functions will transfer to the Partnership. Shared Strategy's grassroots effort moved the region toward a broad and workable collaborative structure to manage salmon recovery on an on-going basis.

For more information, visit Shared Strategy's website
<http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org>



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This case study is published jointly by the Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI) and its applied research and development arm, the National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC). PCI is a national nonprofit organization that promotes consensus building and effective problem solving in states. NPCC is a center of expertise on consensus building for public leaders.

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