Restoring Washington’s Estuaries
Presentation to the Governor’s Council on Goal 3

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Commissioner Ron Wesen, Skagit County

April 2015
Why Value Estuaries & Restoration?

Multi-billion dollar Industries:
recreation & tourism
salmon and shellfish fisheries

Average of 17 local jobs are created per $1 million invested in restoration programs like ESRP and PSAR (Washington OFM 2014)

*ESRP = Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program; PSAR = Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration
Why Prioritize Estuary Restoration?

- **Endangered salmon** – irreplaceable habitat
- **Migratory birds** - feeding and resting
- **Biodiversity** – unique fish and wildlife habitats
- Historical construction of dikes, levees, and ports has converted habitat and altered sustaining physical processes
- **Rare opportunity for large-scale restoration with multiple benefits**
(4.4.e.) “Increase the acreage of Puget Sound estuaries restored in the 16 major rivers from 2,260 acres between 2006 and 2012; and to 5,028 by 2016”
(4.4.e.) “Increase the acreage of Puget Sound estuaries restored in the 16 major rivers from 2,260 acres between 2006 and 2012; and to 5028 by 2016

A

~1-3 Years
Three Crabs Restoration
Fir Island Farms
Skokomish Phase Three
Everett Riverfront
Smith Island Restoration
Blue Heron Slough
Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration
Steamboat Slough

B

Possible in 3-8 Years
Diking District 6
zis a ba Restoration
Leque Island Restoration
Deepwater Slough Phase 2

C

Unknown
Lower Nooksack Project
Union Pacific Setback Levee
Thein Farm
Ellingsen Restoration
Telegraph Slough
North Fork Levee Setback
Everett Marshlands

$110-$320 million
Eelgrass Focus Areas

- Nooksack Delta
- Skagit Delta
- Stillaguamish Delta
- Snohomish Delta
- Lower Hood Canal
- Purdy Spit / Henderson Bay
- Quartermaster Harbor
- Nisqually Delta
- Fisherman Bay

Sources: ESRI, GEBCO, NOAA, National Geographic, Delorme, NAUTIQ, Geocovers, and others.
Coordinated Investment
A Lean Opportunity

PSAR Fund
Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration

Floodplains by Design
Reducing Risk, Restoring Rivers

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Puget Sound Partnership
Department of Ecology, State of Washington
Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
Environmental Protection Agency
NOAA
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
NRCS
Federal Funding Opportunity

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP)

7 DELTA SITES
1) Beaconsfield Feeder Bluff
2) Deepwater Slough
3) Deer Harbor Estuary
4) Dugualla Bay
5) Everett Marshland
6) Livingston Bay
7) Milltown Island
8) Nooksack River Delta
9) North Fork Skagit River Delta
10) Telegraph Slough
11) Spencer Island

IF funded
Up to $1.1 B
5,000 Acres
Phased over 20 years

1 no action
2 11 sites
3 18 sites

*
Locals tell us there are six ingredients for success:

- Funding
- Land
- Politics
- Knowledge
- Capacity
- Permitting
Fostering Innovation

Supportive
Coordinated
State and Federal
Policies

Information Flow

Fish
Floods
Water Quality
Local “Situation Teams”
Farms
Port Susan Restoration

- TNC Leadership
- Collaborative Design
- Low Value Land
- Flood Gate
- Local Support
What is needed for the future?

1. “Coordinated Investment”
   - Farm, Fish and Flood Initiative (Skagit)
   - Snohomish Sustainable Lands Strategy
   - Nooksack SWIF/Restoration Integration

2. Grant Administration Streamlining
   - “Lean” management opportunity
   - Support multiple benefit projects

3. Thank you for being a champion for restoration of “agricultural estuaries” nationally and locally
Reciprocity

Stewardship of fisheries becomes part of an agricultural land ethic

Stewardship of agriculture becomes part of an ecosystem restoration ethic
Ron Wesen
Skagit County Commissioner