

**San Juan Initiative
Policy Group
June 27, 2008
Final Meeting Summary**

Attendees:

Joe Ryan	Geoff Talent	Ken Berg
Tom Cowan	Jeff Bash	Bill Ruckelshaus
Pete Kilpatrick	Jodi Kennedy	Bridget Moran
Lincoln Bormann	Doug Sutherland	Sam Buck
Patty Miller	Rich Doenges	Jonathan White
Bernie Hargrave	Krystyna Wolniakowski	Kevin Ranker
Jeri Ahrenius	Daryl Williams	Lisa Byers
Nick Jones	Kit Rawson	Marilyn O’Conner
Danna Kinsey	Elizabeth Babcock	
Stephanie Buffum Field	Bob Lohn	

Staff:

Jim Kramer
Amy Windrope
Emily Morgan

Public:

Barbara Rosenkotter	Jack Cory
David Loyd	Daniel Miller
Mary Knackstadt	Sharon Kavisto
Louise	Loyd Pratt
Ron Bosh	Lovell Pratt
Gordy Peterson	Susan Keys
Fred Ellis	
Ginny Broadhurst	

Decisions and Commitments

- Policy Group approved June 20th Meeting Summary with the following changes:
Add to the core principles “Gain public support for ecosystem protection.”

- Policy Group reached consensus on Phase 3 focus:

The Policy Group directed the staff to work on two key ecosystem results: retaining native trees and ground cover adjacent to the shoreline and preserving natural shoreline erosion and beach forming processes. They also supported work in a third area, protecting eelgrass and nearshore functions from impacts from docks, if this can be done in conjunction with the first two results and without adding significantly to the demands on the staff. In addressing the issues of native trees and ground cover and beach forming processes, the Policy Group wants this done in a manner that also supports property owner interests for protecting their property from erosion and maintaining scenic views.

In directing the staff to work on the whole system of protection for these two issues, the Policy Group members understand that it may not be possible to improve every part of the system equally, but there will be significant lessons learned and this will help everyone involved in protection to see how they can better manage their part in conjunction with others. It will also be instructive to the State & Federal agencies and tribes for their similar efforts across Puget Sound.

The Policy Group felt that encouraging public involvement and expanding public education around resource protection were keys to the overall success of the San Juan Initiative. Changes to the protection system need to be supported by the community and reflect their values and priorities.

In addition to working with the staff on improving the overall system of protection, representatives from local, state and federal agencies as well as the Tulalip Tribe have committed to the following actions:

Crab Harvest: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Tulalip Tribe agreed to:

- 1) Investigate the impact of commercial crab harvest on eelgrass.
- 2) Explore how the nontribal share of crab harvest could be modified to provide more access to local citizens.

Terrestrial Habitat Assessment: US Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy agreed to work with staff to scope a protection assessment of upland ecosystems that could begin in the next Federal fiscal year starting October 2008.

Stormwater: The County agreed to address the concerns expressed by property owners and trade professionals. They will form a working group of affected parties and develop recommended changes to the County code by the end of 2008.

Improving coordination and access to information: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife committed to:

- 1) To provide better access to ecosystem information to the public, they are creating a web based tool for the public which provides information about ecosystem health in specific areas. Similar to “Go Fish” website
- 2) Develop a web portal for the public to view online applications to Hydraulic Permit Approval process. The pilot will be up later this fall
- 3) Exploring the possibility of creating a shared county/state position that would build local technical capacity and begin to reduce duplication in review process.

Improving voluntary protection: The San Juan Preservation Trust will work with existing shoreline easement owners to improve protection of shoreline resources as part

of an ongoing strategy to improve conservation throughout SJ County over the next several years.

Summary of Discussion

The Policy Group discussed the significant findings from the Draft Report, “What’s Working & What’s Not. This added to the discussion of the local community members discussion on June 20th There was a general appreciation for the report’s clarity and readability. The Policy group expressed surprise at the lack of alignment between state and county permits systems and the inability of the two systems to work together. The Policy Group discussed the “cultural norm” of non-compliance and the necessity for more public support for ecosystem protection. This was echoed by the fact that the HPA program has not received consistent funding for compliance.

In deciding what to focus on, Jim asked for Policy Group comments on the Staff Proposal presented in the June 20th Meeting Summary. There was agreement that in order to improve compliance, we also need to improve our technical support to property owners and trade professionals and have more expertise at the county level. The point was made that improving compliance doesn’t mean that every agency should increase their compliance system or personnel, rather, that we could think strategically about where compliance should be strengthened and make sure that we reduce duplication while encouraging the agencies to excel at their particular mission. Encouraging public involvement and expanding public education around resource protection was highlighted as key to the overall success of the SJI. Changes to the system need to be supported by the community and reflect their values and priorities. It was suggested that staff use the principles of clarity / fairness / inclusion to build solutions and reach out to the general public.

San Juan County was also appreciated for its willingness to be publicly assessed in an effort to promote positive change. Members of the Policy Group expressed a desire for the Initiative to continue past December and concerns were voiced that implementation may not occur without a continuing effort from the SJI.

Public comment included concerns that the SJI would focus on regulatory solutions only. The need for public support and engagement was stressed.