

*Environment Canada-  
United States Environmental Protection Agency*

**Joint Statement of Cooperation  
on the Georgia Basin and  
Puget Sound Ecosystem**

***2003  
Action Plan and  
Report on Progress***

*April 2, 2003*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The three basins of Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia constitute the transboundary Georgia Basin/Puget Sound ecosystem. This ecosystem is one of the most ecologically diverse in North America, containing a wide range of internationally significant species and habitats. Residents of the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound region share a common airshed, common watersheds, a common flyway for migratory birds and habitat for anadromous fish, and common urban growth pressures. The Georgia Basin/Puget Sound ecosystem has a population of approximately 7 million with some projections envisioning an increase to over 9 million by the year 2020. Cooperative planning and management are important to achieving and maintaining sustainable ecosystems and communities in the face of continuing population and economic growth.

The Canadian and US federal governments have a unique responsibility to address the transboundary, transpacific and global environmental challenges confronting the future of this ecosystem. At the national level, agreements are in place between the two agencies for addressing issues such as climate change, air quality, and science and technology matters related to the control of pollution. Regionally, Environment Canada - Pacific Yukon Region (EC-PYR) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-Region 10 have a long standing and successful relationship culminating in the *Joint Statement of Cooperation on the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound Ecosystem*, signed by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Minister of Environment Canada on January 19, 2000.

In addition to supporting national-level programs and priorities, the *Statement of Cooperation* reinforces decades of collaborative activity at the federal, provincial-state and local levels through, for example, the work of the Fraser Basin Council, the Puget Sound Action Team, the BC-Washington Environmental Cooperation Council, and the Georgia Strait Alliance and People for Puget Sound. Through the *Statement of Cooperation*, Environment Canada and the Environmental Protection Agency intend to build on the many worthwhile co-operative initiatives and excellent working relationships that have already been established nationally and regionally.

The *Statement of Cooperation*, which outlines common goals and objectives and serves as a framework for sustainability, is an important step in the evolution of ecosystem-based partnerships in the region as exemplified through programs such as the Georgia Basin Action Plan (GBAP). It promotes closer Canada-US collaboration in addressing the transboundary and global environmental challenges confronting the future of the ecosystem. Specifically, the *Statement of Cooperation* serves to:

- publicly confirm the commitment of the two federal levels of government;
- recognize the special interest of Coast Salish First Nations and Tribes;
- acknowledge and support the excellent efforts in our region related to ecosystem management; and

- establish a formal Canada-US mechanism at the regional level to act on the challenges of sustainability.

The *Statement of Cooperation* also commits Environment Canada and the Environmental Protection Agency to develop annual action plans and report to the public on progress. This current report represents the third *Statement of Cooperation* action plan and second progress report developed jointly by the two agencies in consultation with partners and stakeholders. The 2003 Annual Action Plan and Progress Report focuses on three priority areas for collaboration: 1) transboundary air quality, 2) sharing information and building consensus on ecosystem sustainability, and 3) engaging First Nations and Tribes. In addition to discussing these three priority areas, the 2003 Action Plan and Progress Report highlights opportunities for shared outreach and communication on important transboundary environmental issues while working to promote sustainable and healthy marine, terrestrial, and air ecosystems free of persistent toxics.

EC PYR and EPA Region 10 agree that the lessons learned and experiences generated through the *Statement of Cooperation* partnership should be applied to other transboundary regions shared by our two agencies, in addition to setting the stage for work in other priority areas such as water quality, toxics management, security and climate change.

## 2. GOALS, REPORT ON PROGRESS, AND PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS FOR 2002-2003

The three goals, the Action Plan commitments agreed to in 2000-2001, a report on progress, and new priority action items for the upcoming year are:

### 2.1 Transboundary Air Quality

**Goal: To achieve a greater understanding of transboundary air quality and airshed management in the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound ecosystem by facilitating closer collaboration on research and action among partners and stakeholders in the region.**

#### 2002 Report on Progress:

In March 2002, a meeting of the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy was held to report on progress and explore next steps in transboundary airshed planning. This meeting was attended by representatives of Canadian and United States agencies in British Columbia and Washington State, including Environment Canada (PYR), the Environmental Protection Agency (Region 10), the provincial Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, the Washington State Department of Ecology, municipal governments, regional air quality authorities, and a number of Tribes and First Nations. An important result of this meeting was agreement on a framework for collaboration on five early actions and on the steps toward an international airshed strategy. In addition to discussing regional airshed priorities, participants reviewed and discussed national transboundary air quality activities including the Ozone Annex to the Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement.

In August 2002 Don Fast and John Iani signed the *Statement of Intent* on a Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy. This *Statement of Intent* identifies the shared goals of increased cooperation and information exchange on transboundary air quality management issues.

#### 2001-2002 Action Plan Commitments

Complete the *Statement of Intent* on further cooperative actions towards transboundary airshed planning.

Collaborate on transboundary airshed initiatives and develop plans related to characterizing and modeling the airshed.

Enhance the understanding of the Air Quality Prediction Program.

Support on-going Coast Salish Tribal participation in the transboundary airshed management plan

The development of an airshed characterization is the cornerstone of collaborative efforts in the GB/PS international airshed. The group working on this has made considerable progress since the March 2002 meeting. They met in Seattle on October 2, 2002 to review progress and prepare a report for discussion at the October 24-25, 2002 meeting of the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee.

On October 24-25, 2002 approximately 30 individuals from 12 agencies or organizations comprising the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee met to review the International Airshed Strategy framework and develop a path forward, discuss the status of early actions and obtain direction from the Coordinating Committee, review the status of the airshed characterization project and develop a consensus for modelling objectives. A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to presentation of the airshed characterization work and discussion of next steps. This work will result in two products: guidance for the policy and planning community, and the technical characterization of the airshed.

On January 6, 2003 the US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christie Whitman and Canada's Minister for the Environment the Honourable David Anderson announced the Joint Border Air Quality Initiative. The agreement is a commitment by the two countries to build on the transborder air quality improvements of the last decade by developing new cooperative projects for the years ahead. To implement the Strategy, U.S. government agencies, led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will work with the Canadian Government to identify appropriate pilot projects in consultation with relevant stakeholders such as states, provinces and local governments.

### **2003 Action Plan Commitments for Transboundary Air Quality:**

Significant commitments and next steps agreed to by EC PYR and EPA Region 10 include:

- Continue leading the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee process with EC PYR's hosting of the next Committee meeting on May 14-15, 2003 in Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia.
- Concluded the early actions previously agreed to and complete the airshed characterization exercise by September 2003.
- Review and discuss possible future transboundary management models.
- EPA Region 10 will host the multi-stakeholder Northwest CAPP event in Seattle WA. on June 3-5, 2003.
- Continue to support on-going Coast Salish First Nation and Tribal participation in the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee process.
- Develop a process for managing marine vessel emissions and host a meeting between the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee and marine vessel industries.
- Develop a process to review, access, and manage the permit review information from the various agencies.
- Design and develop a web site that will display information obtained from the Transboundary Air Data Exchange (TRADE).

## 2.2 Sharing Information and Building Consensus on Sustainability

**Goal: To provide residents and decision makers in the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound region with information on Smart Growth/Sustainable Development issues by developing and/or identifying forums and mechanisms to share information.**

### **2002 Report on Progress:**

*Theme A) - Assisting in the exchange of and access to technical information, tools, and best management practices and approaches for advancing ecosystem protection:*

EC and EPA have contributed to many technical events in 2002 for the exchange of information, tools and best management practices:

The GBEI Annual Steering Committee Meeting and Workshop held on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2002 in Vancouver, featured presentations on watershed management and low impact development (the City of Surrey), the GB/PS Ecosystem Indicators Report, and the process and benefits of using indicators at multiple scales in the Georgia Basin (Puget Sound Action Team). Approximately 115 stakeholders and partners of the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound region attended the event.

Led by EC, a Smart Growth Workshop, at the 2002 Union of British Columbia Municipalities annual general meeting on September 24-27 in Whistler British Columbia featured presentations by the University of British Columbia and SmartGrowthBC; federal, provincial, and local government experts on the principles and benefits of smart growth, sensitive ecosystem inventories, ecological gifting, and storm water management techniques. Over 92 local government officials and their staff attended the workshop.

Led by the Puget Sound Action Team, a series of local workshops for promoting low-impact development approaches to local jurisdictions and community interests was recently completed. The series of four workshops was tailored to local practitioner interests and supported with regional experts and studies.

#### **2001-2002 Action Plan Commitments**

Collaborate to provide better web-based access to resource information, planning approaches, best management practices, tools and demonstration projects.

Identify, profile, and support demonstration projects containing smart growth and low-impact development.

Publish a report within the 2001 calendar year on at least six environmental indicators and develop and workplan for developing additional key indicators.

Ensure that these indicators are accessible through a web-based communication and network strategy.

*Theme B) - Watershed protection, smart growth, and low impact development demonstration projects:*

The intent of the inter-agency workgroup in moving forward with transboundary discussions is to act as a catalyst to facilitate, advance, transfer and exchange information on concepts of sustainability at the basin scale. The committee is attempting to achieve this through working along a continuum of watershed protection, smart growth and low impact development approaches.

The work group met twice in 2002 and has since concentrated on pulling together appropriate demonstration projects panel and technical sessions for the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin Research Conference held in Vancouver in the spring of 2003. The gathered demonstration projects and approaches will provide examples of progressive development and management planning from within the shared basin.

*Theme C) - facilitating the design, development and reporting of transborder sustainability indicators:*

The initial Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Environmental Indicator Report was released in May of 2002. It was the product of a binational working group chaired by EC PYR and the WA Department of Ecology with membership from *Statement of Cooperation* and Environmental Cooperation Council partners. Its work was also supported by data experts from approximately twenty-five organizations in both countries. Almost 5000 printed copies of the report were distributed through targeted mailings. A web version of the report was released simultaneously. The website is housed on the BC Washington Environmental Cooperation Council web site, managed by Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/cppl/gbpsei/index.html>).

The Environmental Cooperation Council was briefed on the effort and resulting indicators at both their fall 2001 meeting in Bellingham and at their 2002 spring meeting in Spokane and was positively received. The indicators report was also presented at several other regional conferences and workshops including the Orca Recovery Conference in Seattle and the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative Workshop in Vancouver in May 2002.

### **2003 Action Plan Commitments for Smart Growth/Sustainability:**

*Theme A) - Assisting in the exchange of and access to technical information, tools, and best management practices and approaches for advancing ecosystem protection:*

- Continue to facilitate information exchange by continuing to network and link existing websites to better inform and provide smart growth and watershed protection information.
- Continue to engage federal agencies to participate on the toxic contaminant work groups of the PS/GB international task force.
- Assist in the sharing and transfer of technical information via the design and development of Rapid Access Information Network System (RAINS) as an

interagency information-networking platform, accessible to entities outside of EPA. This platform will be able to accommodate trans-border information, networking selected information and analytical applications for supporting both basin and local ecosystem management needs. A RAINS site available external to EPA will be developed in 2003.

- Continue to work with RAINS as an interagency information-networking platform and explore opportunities to demonstrate RAINS to Canadian audiences.

*Theme B) - Watershed protection, smart growth, and low impact development demonstration projects:*

Continue the discussion and complete a one-year workplan regarding the agencies' involvement in pilot demonstration projects. Establish criteria for involvement including:

- identification of key watersheds in the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin;
- continued development of an inventory of case studies and best practices;
- identification of key pilots for strategic and proactive engagement by EC and EPA.

A number of alternative future, low impact development, and watershed protection case studies and demonstration projects will be presented at the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Research Conference. Demonstration projects will include:

- those that emphasize the collection of performance data at the site, neighbourhood and watershed scales;
- examples of local watershed assessments leading to smarter land-use decisions;
- examples of residential development that follow Low Impact Development;
- focus groups with practitioners to help identify successes and failures through the implementation and monitoring phases;
- evaluate recommendations from the GB/PS Research Conference regarding subsequent smart growth and watershed protection actions.

*Theme C) - Facilitating the design, development and reporting of transborder sustainability indicators:*

The Transboundary Indicator Workgroup met in Victoria in July 2002 and March 2003 and in Seattle in October 2002 to prepare specific recommendations for the 2003-2004 SOC Work Plan. The working group is proposing that more consideration be given to the report's impact and implications on governmental policy. The report could have more impact through deliberate interpretation and targeting of the key messages to other stakeholders and the public.

The work group is proposing to develop a second round report in early 2004 and intends to identify several proposed new indicators including water quality, water use, landscape change, persistent toxic contaminants, and several others at a technical workshop to be held during the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Research Conference.



Statement of Cooperation partners plan to continue to support the transboundary indicator process with the view to keeping federal, provincial and state efforts aligned and all key agencies participating. EPA will seek funding to support report production costs for the 2004 report release.

## 2.3 Engaging First Nations and Tribes

**Goal: To facilitate the participation of First Nations and Tribes in setting future priorities for action in the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound ecosystem.**

### 2002 Report on Progress:

At the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) conference held at the Spokane Convention Center, in Spokane, Washington the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe put forward a resolution asking NCAI to support Washington Tribal participation with US EPA and Environment Canada in the planning, policy development and establishment of environmental priorities in the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin. The resolution was passed by the Congress. EPA provided a grant to the Swinomish Tribal Community to support Tribal meetings and travel directly related to this initiative.

#### 2001-2002 Action Plan Commitments

Conduct respective outreach efforts with individual Tribes and First Nation bands to engage Coast Salish Tribal leaders in the activities of the SOC.

EPA (Region 10) and EC (PYR) Executives will formally consult on an annual basis with Coast Salish Tribal leaders.

Support Coast Salish Tribal-led initiatives including a meeting of Coast Salish Tribes held in conjunction with the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Shellfish Restoration in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

In consultation with Coast Salish Tribal leaders, explore opportunities for displaying Coast Salish language groups, Tribal lands and First Nation reserves, and traditional place names as overlays on existing transboundary digital maps

To help generate interest and participation, the *Statement of Cooperation* was presented and discussed at the EPA Tribal Leaders Summit during the week of January 28, 2002. The purpose of the breakout sessions was to provide the information on the SOC to Tribes within the Region and GB/PS boundary that may not have received the information by other means and to answer questions that the Tribes may have on this initiative. In addition, EPA invited tribal representatives to participate in the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee meetings. Tribes in Washington, Idaho, Oregon, & Alaska who have an interest in transboundary issues attended the sessions.

On April 17-18, 2002 the Sto:lo First Nation, in cooperation with the Coast Salish Sea Initiative, Environment Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada hosted the first ever Coast Salish Environmental Conference in Chilliwack, British Columbia. The conference brought together a number of Coast Salish leaders and environmental specialists to present papers on a range of issues including air and water quality, land-use planning and fisheries management.

EPA presented the *Statement of Cooperation* at the Tribal Water Quality Program Meeting hosted by the Northwest Indian Fish Commission on March 21, 2002.

Following out of this NWIFC meeting, EPA was invited to attend a Makah Tribal Council meeting and present the *Statement of Cooperation* April 29, 2002. The Makah Tribe has rights and privileges secured for their usual and accustomed areas in the Treaty of Neah Bay. These areas are within the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound designated boundary.

Both governments are interested and committed to conducting an annual forum because Tribes and First Nations have a special role to play in the future of the ecosystem and their knowledge, talents and energy should be part of the Pacific Northwest's future. The annual forum commitment will bring the Tribes, First Nations, EC PYR and EPA Region 10 together to discuss the future of the partnership and to develop plans to protect and enhance the health of the ecosystem we share.

EPA Region 10 and EC PYR supported Coast Salish, Tribal, and First Nation participation at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Shellfish Restoration in Nanaimo, British Columbia. The conference included a theme entitled 'First Nations' traditional uses and knowledge, and the importance of shellfish to First Nations, as well as the need for science in the evaluation of restoration activities. A traditional feast hosted by the Snuneymuwx First Nation was also a part of the conference. The planned Coast Salish Sea Initiative meeting scheduled for the day before the conference was cancelled due to the September 11, 2002 terrorist attacks on the United States.

### **2003 Action Plan Commitments for Engaging Tribes/First Nations:**

There continues to be a need to conduct outreach efforts to the individual Tribes and First Nations. This goal will continue as part of the 2003 Action Plan. Efforts will be made to seek input from Tribes and First Nations regarding their needs for ecosystems protection which could include their concerns related to toxic threats to subsistence harvest, airshed protection over their lands, and other cultural and community concerns that relate to the shared ecosystem. All Tribes and First Nations that call the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound ecosystem their home will be consulted, if they wish, with regards to the work under the SOC. This includes not only Tribes and First Nations in the Coast Salish traditional territory but other tribes outside the Coast Salish area but within the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound boundaries.

- Support and solicit First Nation participation in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound Research Conference March 31 - April 3, 2003 in Vancouver. Participation both at the Advisory Committee level and as presenters, will be a significant milestone in sharing traditional knowledge.
- Conduct a May 2003 meeting between EC PYR and EPA Region 10 to flush out goals, strategy, agenda and logistics for a 'roundtable' meeting with Tribes and First Nations from the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound.
- Host the June 2003 'roundtable' meeting with key EC PYR and EPA Region 10 Executives, Tribal Leaders and Elders from the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound, and SOC working members to discuss setting future Tribal and First Nations priorities

for action in the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound ecosystem.

- Support the Coast Salish Sea Initiative through the Georgia Basin Action Plan and hire a First Nation liaison position as staff with EC PYR to assist in this effort.
- Recognize and uphold the U.S. Government's Tribal Trust Responsibility and the Government-to-Government relationship on the US side of the border per the U.S. Presidential Indian Policy and the EPA Indian Policy.
- Support an annual Forum between First Nation leaders and the Georgia Basin Action Plan partner agency heads through Environment Canada's process for renewal of the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative. This commitment could be combined with a SOC tribal and First Nation consultation process.

### 3. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Significant communication and outreach activities have occurred since the implementation of the first annual Action Plan under *Statement of Cooperation*. For example:

- On May 15, 2002, the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative held a public meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia attended by EPA Region 10 staff as well as staff from other US Agencies.
- Senior officials from EC PYR and EPA Region 10 presented material on the *Statement of Cooperation* and our cooperative work on transboundary air quality issues in particular at the July 25-29, 2001 joint Council of State Governments-West (CSGWest) / Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) conference "Future of the North American West: Three Nations, One Region" in Whistler, British Columbia.
- Representatives from both EPA Region 10 and EC PYR contributed expert and professional support to the joint class at the University Of Washington, University of Western Washington, and the University of British Columbia on the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin: Managing an International Ecosystem held in the Fall of 2001 and 2002.

Recognizing the need to better communicate the goals and activities of the *Statement of Cooperation* to other agencies and the general public, EPA Region 10 and EC PYR intend to continue to communicate broadly as part of our Annual Action Plan for 2003. The purpose of this communication exercise will be to outline our respective mandates and business line priorities, highlight the uniqueness of the region and the threats to residents' quality of life, and introduce the *Statement of Cooperation* and the commitment of EPA and EC to work with others in finding shared solutions to common environmental problems. Components of these communication efforts are to:

- Develop a generic power-point presentation aimed at a broad audience
- Continue to support linkages with universities including providing support and participation in the joint University of Washington and University of British Columbia course entitled "Puget Sound/Georgia Basin: Protecting and Managing an International Ecosystem", as well as the public lecture series planned in conjunction with the course
- Support the upcoming Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Research Conference to be held at the Westin Bayshore Hotel in Vancouver on March 31-April 3, 2003.

#### 4. ENHANCING THE EPA-EC PARTNERSHIP

EPA and EC agree that the partnership arrangement developed under the *Statement of Cooperation* has served to strengthen and energized an already excellent working relationship at the regional level. Our on-going work in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound Ecosystem provides a template for the interactions between our two agencies, and guides our approach and actions throughout the entire shared region. To help facilitate our broader relationship, we have established an EPA (Region 10) and EC (PYR) Working Group with the view to ensuring continued successful collaborations. This Working Group will report to the EPA and EC regional Executive Teams, which will meet jointly a minimum of once a year.

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