

*Environment Canada-
United States Environmental Protection Agency*

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

2008-2010 Action Plan
Initiatives for the Salish Sea

November 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

The Salish Sea

The three basins of Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia constitute the transboundary Salish Sea or 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 concerns over urban growth pressures. The Georgia Basin-Puget Sound region has a population of approximately 7 million with some projections envisioning an increase to over 9.4 million by the year 2025.

The Salish Sea is the homeland of the Coast Salish People, represented by 55 Nations in Canada and 23 Tribes in the United States. The Coast Salish have an inextricable and sacred connection with the environment and resources of the Salish Sea ecosystem. The ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish people are rich in a diverse array of marine and upland resources unique to this area. The environment has historically sustained Coast Salish lifeways and traditions. Salmon are the icon of this essential and yet diminishing connection of the Coast Salish people to their land and waters. Their homelands and their resources are under significant pressure from population growth, industrial expansion and economic demands. As stewards of the lands and waters we share their sacred responsibility to ensure our children's children will have a healthy ecosystem to live in.

The Joint Statement of Cooperation

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 governments for addressing issues such as air quality, migratory birds, transboundary waters and transport of hazardous waste. Regionally, Environment Canada (EC) - Pacific and Yukon Region and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Region 10 have a long standing and successful relationship. This association provided the foundation for the creation of the *Joint Statement of Cooperation on the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound Ecosystem (Statement of Cooperation)*, signed by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Minister of Environment Canada on January 19, 2000.

The *Statement of Cooperation* advocates a common framework for sustainability in the region. 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 by the two federal levels of government to transboundary collaboration for the health of the Georgia Basin – Puget Sound ecosystem;
- recognize the special role and interests of Coast Salish Nations and Tribes;
- acknowledge and support the excellent efforts in our region related to ecosystem management; and
- establish a formal Canada-US commitment at the regional level to work cooperatively on the challenges identified in the *Statement of Cooperation*, including sustainability.

The 2008-2010 Action Plan

The Statement of Cooperation commits Environment Canada and the Environmental Protection Agency to develop annual action plans and report to the public on progress. This document is the 2008-2010 Action Plan. It has three focus areas:

- transboundary collaboration;
- sharing knowledge and information;
- transboundary demonstration projects that contribute to improved air quality, water quality and habitat and species health.

In addition to setting goals and actions for these three areas, the 2008-2010 Action Plan highlights opportunities for shared outreach and communication on important transboundary environmental issues in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound.

A renewed *Statement of Cooperation* Working Group was formed in May 2007, co-chaired by EC Pacific and Yukon and EPA Region 10 with representation from the Coast Salish Gathering Coordinators, the British Columbia Ministry of the Environment, Washington State Department of Ecology and the Puget Sound Partnership to facilitate a multilateral discussion on the development of this 2008-2010 Action Plan (see Appendix 2 for a list of Working Group participants and chronology of the Action Plan development).

The last *Statement of Cooperation* Action Plan and Report on Progress signed off by EC Pacific and Yukon and the EPA Region 10 covered the 2004-2006 period. Appendix 1 provides an update for 2007/2008 on progress made on several transboundary efforts, including the Georgia Basin Puget Sound Research Conference, the Coast Salish Gatherings, transboundary indicators reporting and the International Airshed Strategy.

Several other significant developments have taken place in 2007/2008 including:

- The creation of the Puget Sound Partnership in June 2007. An Action Agenda for 2020 is being developed and will be finalized by December 2008.
- A period of transition for the Georgia Basin Action Plan and work by Environment Canada to examine the future of its Ecosystem Initiative program nationally.
- Establishment of the State of Washington – Province of British Columbia Coastal and Oceans Task Force in June 2007. This is considered the evolution of the former Georgia Basin/Puget Sound International Task Force under the BC/Washington Environmental Cooperation Council. Terms of reference and a draft work plan have been developed for the Task Force.
- The Coast Salish Gatherings as an evolving model for transboundary cooperation which has enriched the transboundary relationships and dialogue in the Salish Sea. The Coast Salish Gatherings do not replace government to government consultation, but rather provide a forum for Coast Salish leadership to share their environmental issues and concerns and provide a unified voice to protect their shared homelands and waters. A Prologue and mission statement along with a working Coast Salish Gathering Environmental Action Plan were adopted at the 2008 Coast Salish Gathering in Tulalip, Washington.

See Appendix 3 for a description of the mandate, priorities and membership of the transboundary cooperative efforts being undertaken in the Salish Sea.

2. GOALS AND ACTIONS FOR 2008-2010

2.1 Transboundary Governance

Goal: Improve functional coordination of transboundary plans and action.

- a) Continue to support and recognize the annual Coast Salish Gatherings as a unique forum for the six governing bodies in the Salish Sea to come together to find common ground on priority environmental issues, policies and projects and develop joint actions and recommendations.
- b) Develop options and convene discussions on multi-lateral institutional mechanisms that could more effectively support transboundary ecosystem planning and management for the Salish Sea.
- c) Work with the Puget Sound Partnership, the Georgia Basin Action Plan, the Coastal and Oceans Task Force, and the Coast Salish Gatherings by:
 - Identifying transboundary initiatives that could be included in the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda for 2020.
 - Identifying opportunities to collaborate on priorities and projects outlined in the Coast Salish Gathering Environmental Action Plan, in particular in the areas of toxics in traditional foods, water quantity and quality, and climate change impacts.
 - Working through the Coastal and Oceans Task Force to implement joint initiatives in the areas of habitat restoration, coastal and oceans indicators and climate change impacts.
- d) Continue to support the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy via participation by core staff from agencies responsible for air quality management in the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound areas. Participating agencies include EC, EPA Region 10, BC Ministry of Environment, Washington Department of Ecology, Metro Vancouver, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, Fraser Valley Regional District, Northwest Clean Air Agency, Health Canada, US National Parks Service, Olympic Region Clean Air Agency and others.

2.2 Knowledge and Information Sharing

Goal: Support knowledge and information sharing on transboundary ecosystem issues.

- a) Coordinate and deliver the 2009 Puget Sound - Georgia Basin Ecosystem Conference (February 8-11, 2009) with the Puget Sound Partnership. The 2009 Research Conference will present opportunities to:
-

- link science and Coast Salish traditional ecological knowledge to policy and management for the Salish Sea;
 - present an update of the original findings of the 1993 Marine Science Panel and identify any new drivers of change in the marine environment;
 - explore transboundary collaborative options for the Salish Sea;
 - profile the Puget Sound Action Agenda for 2020 and launch its implementation; and
 - improve understanding of climate change impacts and share adaptation and planning strategies for Salish Sea communities.
- b) Explore ways to apply and further develop the transboundary indicators for the Salish Sea ecosystem.
- Develop a strategic information map in order to identify transboundary data gaps and assist with strategic integration of data and information for wider use and application.
 - Host a transboundary information meeting on recent indicator development and emerging future directions occurring on each side of the basin, including Coast Salish knowledge across the basin.
 - Where data are immediately available, conduct an update of existing Puget Sound - Georgia Basin transboundary indicator metrics and graphics.
 - Scope out possibilities for an information system that will facilitate future updates.
 - Explore the feasibility of adding a short set of indicators to the transboundary indicator portfolio given current data sets with consideration given to human health, community health, climate change, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge indicator themes.
 - Explore collaborations with the Fisheries & Oceans Canada Strait of Georgia Ecosystem Research Initiative and similar programs in Puget Sound to enhance marine ecosystem indicators.
 - Determine the feasibility of establishing a transboundary monitoring program like the Gulf Watch program used by the transboundary Gulf of Maine Marine Council.
- c) Support coordinated efforts to develop new information on transboundary air quality issues of concern. This includes new information related to transportation sector emissions including from marine, rail, road sectors, area source emissions such as residential wood smoke and agricultural emissions and point source emissions from industrial facilities.

In addition, support work related to analysis of the effects of degraded air quality, including effects to human health from diesel combustion emissions and ozone, effects on the natural environment such as ecosystem nutrient balance changes from atmospheric deposition of pollutants and effects to quality of life such as degraded visibility from air pollution in the region.

- d) Exchange information on the respective Disposal at Sea programs of EC Pacific and Yukon Region and EPA Region 10. This may include:
- participation on disposal site surveys in the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin;
 - sharing of disposal at sea site monitoring results; and
 - development of contact protocols for planned and emergency procedures at or near the international border.
- e) Support information sharing on toxics through the Pacific Region Contaminants Atlas to be housed on the Community Mapping Network <http://www.shim.bc.ca/> and the 2009 Puget Sound - Georgia Basin Ecosystem Conference. Encourage the development of common data and information to support development of a toxics source control strategy across the transboundary basin. The U.S. toxics working group will reach out to include key Canadian representatives in U.S. toxics assessment and source control efforts.
- f) Support the information sharing initiatives of the Coast Salish Gatherings like the Canoe Journeys Water Quality Data Gathering project, the Coast Salish Atlas project and a Coast Salish Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Science Conference.

2.3 Transboundary Demonstration Projects

Goal: Promote targeted planning and actions through transboundary demonstration projects that will contribute to positive change in air quality, water quality and habitat and species health.

- a) Address air and greenhouse gas emission issues from cross border traffic (in particular from idling trucks and vehicles), marine vessels and ports (e.g. through electrification of port facilities), rail lines and stations (e.g. from idling locomotives) and others.
- b) Protect and improve water quality in shellfish growing areas through community-based initiatives such as the Shared Waters Alliance in Boundary Bay/Drayton Harbour.
- c) Improve species recovery and marine and nearshore restoration strategies. Demonstration projects could include the removal of derelict fishing gear and creosote pilings and reducing non-essential hard-armouring of shorelines.
-

3. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The purpose of our communications and outreach activities will be to outline our respective mandates and priorities, highlight the uniqueness of the region and the threats to residents' quality of life, and share the intent of the *Statement of Cooperation* and the commitment of Environment Canada Pacific and Yukon and the Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 to work with others in finding solutions to common environmental problems. Specific successful projects and achievements under the Action Plan (e.g., removal of derelict gear and other projects undertaken under this Action Plan) could be more deliberately highlighted in public communication and outreach activities. Some key communications and outreach opportunities include:

- The 2009 Puget Sound-Georgia Basin Ecosystem Conference
 - The 2009 Coast Salish Gathering
 - 2003-2008 Georgia Basin Action Plan Report
 - Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda fora
 - Environment Canada and EPA Region 10 websites
 - The British Columbia and State of Washington Environmental Cooperation Council annual meeting
 - Fora like the Pacific and Northwest Economic Region and the Pacific Northwest Environmental Directors
-

4. ENHANCING THE PARTNERSHIP

EPA and EC agree that the partnership arrangement developed under the *Statement of Cooperation* serves to strengthen our working relationship at the regional level. In an effort to facilitate a broader relationship with our partners in the Salish Sea, we will continue to explore options for a multilateral initiative for the Salish Sea and support a *Statement of Cooperation* Working Group co-chaired by EC Pacific and Yukon and EPA Region 10 with representatives from BC Ministry of the Environment, Washington State Department of Ecology, Coast Salish Gathering Steering Committee, and the Puget Sound Partnership. The Co-chairs of the Working Group will report to the EPA and EC executive teams which will meet jointly a minimum of once a year.

/s/

Paul Kluckner
Regional Director General
Environment Canada
Pacific and Yukon

/s/

Elin Miller
Regional Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Region 10

Appendices

- 1. Update on Transboundary Efforts in 2007/2008**
 - 2. *Statement of Cooperation* Working Group and Chronology of Action Plan Development**
 - 3. Partnership Arrangements in the Salish Sea**
-

Coast Salish Gatherings in January 2007 and February 2008

www.coastsalishgathering.com

In 2007 and 2008, Coast Salish leaders from Canada and the United States continued to build on the outcomes of the first Coast Salish Gathering of 2005 to speak with one voice for the Salish Sea. Leaders at the 2007 Gathering in Cowichan, British Columbia discussed the need for effective participation of Coast Salish peoples in various treaties, agreements and policies designed to protect the Salish Sea ecosystem. In Tulalip, Washington in February 2008, the Coast Salish leadership adopted a mission statement and prologue, as well as a working Coast Salish Environmental Action Plan. A number of projects were also identified including a shared information database, a water quality monitoring project that will be conducted through the Tribal Journeys and a Coast Salish Tribal indicators project.

Georgia Basin Puget Sound Research Conference in March 2007

<http://www.engr.washington.edu/epp/psgb/>

Over 900 delegates attended and participated in the 2007 Georgia Basin Puget Sound Research Conference, “Knowledge for the Salish Sea: Toward Collaborative Transboundary Solutions” convened at the Westin Bayshore Hotel and Conference Centre in Vancouver, March 26 – 29 2007. The conference focused on four sub-themes:

1. The interface between science, policy and culture.
2. Data gaps, knowledge gaps and the uncertainties that remain.
3. Examples of partnerships for a changing environment.
4. The role of humans as part of the ecosystem.

Special features of the conference program included a keynote address by world-renowned fisheries scientist Dr. Daniel Pauly, a Coast Salish Plenary Session and a dinner hosted by the Squamish Nation, an ambitious “Greening the Conference” agenda, an exhibit of paintings from the “Islands in the Salish Sea” collection, a Poster Gala and Film Festival, and off-program field trips.

The general impression received from the post-conference survey (which echoed the general impression heard in the hallways of the conference during its delivery) was expressed in the summary report as:

... overwhelmingly positive. While participants did offer their thoughts on how the conference could be improved in future years, they also expressed thanks and congratulations to the conference organizers, commended the interdisciplinary and interjurisdictional approach taken to understanding the issues for the Georgia Basin, and offered high praise for the conference as a source of new knowledge and a resource to support effective partnership building.

Publication of the Transboundary Indicators Report in Canada

<http://www.epa.gov/region10/psgb/indicators/>

Executive summaries of the Transboundary Indicators Report were released to a Canadian policy and public audience in March 2007. These summaries were strategically designed to extract and communicate salient findings from the technical 2006 Transboundary Indicators Report. Over 1200 summaries were mailed out and made available on the Georgia Basin Action Plan website and the regional environmental indicators website simultaneously. Positive support for continuing reporting on transboundary indicators have come in the form of requests for further information and involvement in local indicators initiatives.

Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy

http://www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/airshed/index_e.htm

Two inter-agency meetings of the Georgia Basin – Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy were held in 2007/ 08. The meetings provided fora to discuss emerging air quality issues of concern in the transboundary airshed, including visibility science and management, agricultural emissions and atmospheric deposition. Reports were also presented from International Airshed Strategy component initiative work groups on marine and port emissions, clean vehicles and fuels, residential wood smoke, transboundary science, review of new sources and others.

APPENDIX 2: STATEMENT OF COOPERATION WORKING GROUP AND CHRONOLOGY OF ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Statement of Cooperation Working Group members¹:

Angela Stadel/Heather Wood, Environment Canada (Working Group co-chair)
Michael Rylko/Lisa McGuire, EPA Region 10 (Working Group co-chair)
Ray Harris, Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group – Coast Salish Gathering Coordinator
Debra Lekanof and Charles O'Hara, Swinomish Tribal Community – Coast Salish Gathering Coordinators
Tom Laurie, Washington State Department of Ecology
David Grace/Penny Lloyd, BC Ministry of the Environment
Ron Shultz/Scott Redman/Ron Kreizenbeck, Puget Sound Partnership

Chronology of meetings and steps in the development of the 2008-2010 Action Plan:

May 31, 2007 – Bellingham, WA – Meeting of the *Statement of Cooperation* Working Group to scope out a framework and process for the development of a new Action Plan.

September 19, 2007 – Vancouver, BC – Meeting of the *Statement of Cooperation* Working Group. Decision to develop a discussion document on existing and emerging transboundary partnerships in order to better align the actions under the Statement of Cooperation.

January 16, 2008 – Seattle, Washington – Meeting of the *Statement of Cooperation* Working Group. Discussion of the transboundary matrix of partnerships and issues and agreement on a framework and process for the development of a 2008-2010 Action Plan.

February 27-29, 2008 – Tulalip, WA – Coast Salish Gathering. Paul Kluckner, Regional Director General for Environment Canada and Elin Miller, Regional Administrator for EPA Region 10 listen to the Coast Salish Chiefs, Tribal Chairpersons and Elders and speak about opportunities to collaborate on shared issues through the *Statement of Cooperation*

March 27-28, 2008 – Tseil Waututh Nation – Future of the Georgia Basin Workshop. *Statement of Cooperation* Working Group holds a short meeting at the end of the workshop to confirm contributions to the content, and how best to align 2008-2010 Action Plan: Initiatives for the Salish Sea with the Coast Salish Gathering Environmental Action Plan.

¹The Statement of Cooperation Working group represents the core group that has advised Environment Canada Pacific and Yukon and EPA Region 10 on the development of the 2008-2010 Action Plan: Initiatives for the Salish Sea. Additional guidance has come from the Coast Salish Sea Initiative, the Coast Salish Gathering Steering Committee and the Georgia Basin Action Plan staff and partners.

April - May, 2008 – EC and EPA co-chairs prepare draft 2008-2010 Action Plan: Initiatives for the Salish Sea for review by key partners in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound region.

May 2, 2008 – Swinomish Tribal Community, WA – Coast Salish Gathering Steering Committee meets and provides initial feedback on the draft 2008-2010 Action Plan: Initiatives for the Salish Sea.

May 30 - June 30, 2008 – Draft 2008-2010 Action Plan is sent out to key partners including all Coast Salish Nations and Tribes, and federal, provincial, state and other ecosystem-based organizations in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound for a review and comment period.

September 10, 2008 – Swinomish Tribal Community, Washington – Information meeting for Coast Salish Nations and Tribes to discuss the draft 2008-2010 Action Plan: Initiatives for the Salish Sea and opportunities for collaboration.

November 2008 – 2008-2010 Action Plan: Initiatives for the Salish Sea is finalized and released on the EPA and EC websites.

APPENDIX 3 : PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS IN THE SALISH SEA

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

http://www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/georgiaBasin/gb-psPartnership_e.htm

Established: The Joint Statement of Cooperation (SoC) was signed by the Minister of Environment and the EPA Region 10 Administrator on January 19, 2000. The first Action Plan was developed for 2000-2002.

Mandate: To establish a formal Canada-US agreement (non-legally binding) for regional-level planning and action on transboundary sustainability challenges.

Governance: Environment Canada (EC) and EPA Region 10 are signatories to the SoC. Administration and management of the SoC falls to staff of EC-Pacific and Yukon Region and EPA-Region 10. A Working Group with representatives from EC, EPA Region 10, Coast Salish Gathering Secretariats, BC Ministry of the Environment, Washington State Department of Ecology and the Puget Sound Partnership supports the Action Plan development and progress reporting.

Georgia Basin/Puget Sound/International Airshed Strategy

www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/airshed/

Established: In August 2002, a Statement of Intent was signed by the Regional Director General of EC Pacific and Yukon and the EPA Region 10 Regional Administrator to develop the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy (IAS).

Mandate: To develop and implement initiatives to improve air quality in the transboundary Georgia Basin-Puget Sound region.

Governance: EC Pacific and Yukon and EPA Region 10 act as co-lead agencies, coordinating joint activities of the IAS Coordinating Committee which has representatives from Canadian and U.S. (federal, provincial, state and local) air quality management agencies, and Coast Salish Nations and Tribes in the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound region.

Coast Salish Gatherings

www.coastsalishgathering.com

Established: The first Coast Salish Gathering took place in 2005 in Jamestown S'Klallam, followed by the 2007 gathering in Duncan, British Columbia and the 2008 gathering in Tulalip, Washington.

Mandate: To provide a policy dialogue on environmental and natural resources issues and recommend policy and actions to federal and state agencies

Governance: The Coast Salish Gatherings are a forum for Coast Salish Nation and Tribal leaders guided by a Coast Salish Gathering Steering Committee with administrative support from the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Coast Salish Sea Initiative and Georgia Basin Action Plan Steering Committee Coast Salish Nation representatives. Key non-tribal senior officials also participate from: Environment Canada, Pacific and Yukon, EPA Region 10, BC Ministry of the Environment, Washington State Department of Ecology, and the Puget Sound Partnership.

State of Washington – Province of British Columbia Coastal and Ocean Task Force

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/spd/ecc/>

Established: In June 2007 through the Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Washington and the Province of British Columbia on Pacific Coast Collaboration to protect Our Shared Climate and Ocean, signed by Governor Christine Gregoire and Premier Gordon Campbell.

Mandate: To provide a mechanism to enhance collaboration between the State of Washington and the Province of British Columbia on coastal and oceans issues.

Governance: Washington State Department of Ecology and BC Ministry of the Environment co-chairs will be responsible for ensuring broad representation from coastal and ocean resource management agencies in respective jurisdictions. The Coastal and Oceans Task Force will report to the Province of British Columbia Washington State Environmental Cooperation Council which was established in May 1992.

Georgia Basin Action Plan (GBAP)

http://www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/georgiabasin/Index_e.htm

Established: In 2003 as the second phase of the earlier Georgia Basin Ecosystem initiative (1998-2003).

Mandate: To undertake goals and actions that provide healthy, productive and sustainable ecosystems and communities in the Georgia Basin through collaborative stewardship actions, sharing of scientific and indigenous knowledge and protection of targeted ecosystems.

Governance: The GBAP is guided by a Steering Committee chaired by Environment Canada with representatives from Parks Canada, Department of

Fisheries and Oceans, BC Ministry of the Environment and five Coast Salish Nation representatives.

Puget Sound Partnership (PSP)

<http://www.psp.wa.gov/index.html>

Established: In June 2007 replacing the previous Puget Sound Action Team.

Mandate: To restore Puget Sound to a healthy ecosystem by 2020, through the development of an Action Agenda which will prioritize cleanup and improvement projects, and coordinate federal, state, local, tribal and private resources. PSP is to base decisions on science, focus on actions that have the biggest impact, and hold people and organizations accountable for results.

Governance: The Partnership is governed by a Leadership Council of independent citizens from around the Sound and is advised by an Ecosystem Coordination Board and a Science Panel. An Executive Director leads day-to-day operations of the PSP.
