

Memorandum

To: Barbara Rosenkotter

From: Antonia Jindrich, Evergreen Funding Consultants

Re: Big Picture Project funding.

We were asked to research potential funding for an assessment of how salmon use the nearshore environment in the San Juan Islands. We were asked to examine potential funding sources that are available either for the preferred \$1.3 million shared assessment of five watersheds or for a more limited \$600,000 assessment of San Juan County's nearshore. In particular, the short term goal was to assess the feasibility of funding the entire project, or whether the watershed should limit the scope of the project in order to pursue funding through SRFB Round 8.

Funding the entire "big picture"

After looking at the available sources of funding, it seems the ecosystem-level scope of the project somewhat limits the potential for funding the entire project through traditional sources. However, given the importance of this information to regional recovery efforts, and the enthusiasm of the participants for pursuing this information, it makes sense to examine the possibility of more non-traditional sources such as federal direct appropriations, large federal grant programs, or linking the project to address scientific needs of the Puget Sound Partnership.

Earmarking particular federal funds for this project would require a high level of political access but would be the most direct route for receiving the necessary funds. New rules that have been put in place by the new Democratic congress may limit the ability to earmark funds in the traditional manner. The new rules are in their infancy and it is difficult to determine the exact impact of them on earmarking. There may be a way to direct a federal agency, such as EPA, to conduct the kind of study that is contemplated here. It would likely be worth approaching key members of the state delegation with appropriations involvement to discuss the project and gauge their level of interest in it.

EPA's Science to Achieve Results Program (STAR), through the National Center for Environmental Research provides fairly substantial grants (\$200,000-\$500,000) that could help support the entire program. This program supports scientific research, using a quarterly Request for Application process to solicit research proposals on a particular topic. The proposal would need to then fit into the particular topic that they are interested in studying that quarter. Past grants have supported ecosystem-level modeling research and holistic planning. The number of grants seems to have declined in recent years, however, and the upcoming topic areas would need some creative effort to make them relevant for a nearshore project. (They include: Research for Outcomes and Accountability: Development of Novel Environmental Health Outcome Indicators; and Ecological Impacts from the Interaction of Climate Change, Land Use Change and Invasive Species.)

Another possible funding source may be the newly created Puget Sound Partnership. Much of their mission centers on determining key threats to Puget Sound and its species and devising strategies to effectively address the threats. A great deal of scientific research will need to be undertaken in the very near future to meet the mission of the new Partnership.

Approaching the Partnership officials once they are appointed might be a good strategy to acquire some of the federal research money that may be appropriated to the Partnership.

Combining these sources could allow you to leverage the entire need for the project. If you were able to get some federal and local money, you might then be able to work with the Puget Sound partnership or the legislature to match the funding during the 2008 supplemental budget process.

Funding for the more limited project

More limited and defined nearshore projects have been done around Puget Sound, and could be funded through state, federal, or private foundation sources. Of the three, state SRFB funds seem to have funded the most nearshore assessments in the region.

Foundation Grant sources:

The most promising foundation source I was able to identify was the Russell Family Foundation. They fund work in Puget Sound, and their specific objectives include work to “support sound research and monitoring, especially when it effectively involves citizens and is used to inform them.” A nearshore assessment seems to be eligible to receive funding (they do not fund capital projects, land acquisition, watershed planning, or local government and special district programs), and they have supported several projects that are related (including scientific work to advance Puget Sound knowledge, and monitoring of Commencement Bay). Most of their grants, however, are focused on programs, education, and development, and their listing of funded projects indicates that they most of their grants are relatively small (in the \$15,000 to \$50,000 range) in comparison to the needs of the project.

A review of other foundations (Brainerd, Bullett, and Hewlett foundations) didn’t yield promising results, either because of the type of project or the focus area didn’t match the specified areas.

Federal Sources:

Restore America’s Estuaries put together a helpful federal 2006 funding guide (found at: <http://www.estuaries.org/assets/documents/Federal%20Funding%20Guide%202006%20PDF%20on%20line.pdf>). It gives a good overview of federal grant programs for related projects. After spending some time reviewing the programs listed, it seemed that none of the grant programs specifically called-out assessments as part of their scope. Instead, many focus on construction projects, or projects with particular, and unrelated, focuses.

State Sources:

Of the sources reviewed, state sources for funding a nearshore assessment seemed most promising. While the ESRP program is focused on on-the ground programs, as is the Puget Sound Salmon Fund (name not finalized) just established by the state legislature, the SRFB has funded a number of nearshore assessments in the past.

Looking through the PRISM database shows about 17 projects funded by the SRFB. The total project costs listed range from \$64,000 to \$340,000, with the average cost about \$175,000. They also have put together specific guidance on what elements a nearshore assessment should include, indicating they have put some thought into the topic (http://iac.wa.gov/Documents/SRFB/Grants/Salmon_Recovery/Nearshore_Assess_Guidance_5-14-02.pdf).