

# Georgia Basin/Puget Sound International Task Force



**ECC Update**  
**February 2004**

# Task Force History



- Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Work Group established (1992)
- Marine Science Panel (*May 1993*)
  - Report on the state of the marine environment in shared waters
  - Identify trends in aquatic and biological conditions
- Symposium on Marine Environment (*January 1994*)
- Marine Science Panel Report (*September 1994*)
  - 12 priority recommendations

# Priority Issues

- Minimizing habitat loss.
- Establishing marine protected areas.
- Protecting marine plants and animals.
- Minimizing the introduction of non-native species.



# Secondary Priorities

- Controlling toxic wastes.
- Coordinating monitoring and research needs.
- Strategic planning in the shared waters.

# Five Year Review (2000)



- Five year review noted that the Task Force had produced policies and actions which addressed the majority of the Marine Science Panel recommendations.
- The review also identified nine specific activities that at the time required further attention by the Task Force, the majority of which focused on information exchange and facilitating cross border communications around marine issues

# ITF Action Plan



- In April 2003 the ECC members again directed that the Task Force review its mandate and return with a recommendation as to the future of the group.
- At the time of this request, the Task Force was already engaged in the development of an Action Plan.
- Developed in response to the relative dormancy of several of the work groups, it was envisioned that the Action Plan would serve as a two-year work plan for revitalizing the Task Force.

# Habitat Loss



- Review BC Strategy to Prevent Coastal Habitat Loss and Degradation in the Georgia Basin in light of British Columbia government restructuring.
- Revisit Washington's Nearshore Habitat Loss in Puget Sound: Recommendations for Improved Management Strategy with objective of updating task list.
- Track progress of BC partner groups on implementation of recommendations.
- Share best management practices for prevention of near-shore habitat loss.

# Marine Protected Areas



- Forum to exchange scientific data/knowledge related to Marine Protected Areas
- Track activities and facilitate ongoing dialogue related to Marine Protected Areas implementation
- Expand working group to include BC Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management.
- Work with Parks Canada on the full range of trans-boundary marine issues as a contribution to the feasibility study for the proposed national marine conservation area in the southern Strait of Georgia
- Implement the recommendations of the Orca Pass working group.

# Protect Marine Life



- Continue trans-boundary species by species harvest management discussions.
- Reconvene Washington working group and explore the opportunity to integrate with BC working group.
- Establish Washington sub-group to revisit marine species reports and develop revised set of recommendations.
- Develop Phase 2 of the BC Marine Species Report (recommendations phase).
- Increase scientific exchange and collaboration on ecosystem function and their relationship to MPAs.
- Share best practices for marine aquaculture
- Increase the role of the Task Force in tracking/communicating around Orca recovery

# Non-Indigenous Species



- Conduct joint evaluation and risk assessment of NIS recorded in shared waters to identify priorities for future NIS work
- Explore potential for instituting a rapid NIS response process for BC
- Strengthen links between BC and Washington work groups

# Toxic Waste



- Finalise BC Contaminant Profile report
- Complete BC work group report Finalise the BC Contaminated site report
- Complete Washington work group report
- Forward BC work group recommendations to ECC
- Forward Washington work group recommendations to ECC
- Joint review of BC and Washington work group recommendations and setting of future joint direction on toxics management

# Monitoring and Research



- Revitalize working group by identifying members appropriate to group conference/exchange tasks
- Encourage and support scientific discussion related to monitoring and other marine resource issues
- Convene regular trans-boundary monitoring conferences, beginning with conference in Spring 04.

# Trans-boundary Indicators



- Publish a set of trans-boundary indicators for the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound.
- Encourage the development of integrated data to contribute to trans-boundary indicators
- Identify those ecosystem conditions that have not been reported on bi-nationally, but are needed from both scientific and management perspectives.
- Seek Task Force guidance as necessary regarding the policy implications of indicators work
- Report (non-exclusively) to Task Force on issues raised by the indicators that have policy, legal and other implications.

# Continuing Challenges



- Limited existing resources in a period of fiscal restraint – “corner of the desk”
- Public participation limited,— need for improved public awareness
- Learning to cope with fragmented jurisdictions and differences in mandates
- Commitment and participation by members on TF and work group varies
- Implementation of recommended actions is a challenge/opportunity

# Additional Considerations



- The Task Force presently consists of separate US and Canadian working groups for each priority issue.
- The proposed Action Plan focuses primarily on trans-boundary communication and information exchange. Noted exceptions to this are the Toxics and Indicators groups.
- While the communication and relationship building facilitated by the Task Force are valuable, they do little to contribute directly to achieving the specific goals of the member agencies.

# Future of the Task Force



**Option 1:** Implement the Action Plan

**Option 2:** Place the Task Force in abeyance until such time as an issue arises that warrants its reactivation.

**Option 3:** Permanently disband the Task Force.