

Prioritizing Components and Vital Signs

Last year, Sno-Stilly LIO Committee members identified 18 of Puget Sound Partnership's original 21 Vital Signs as being present in the Snohomish and Stillaguamish watersheds. Of those 18, six were identified as very high priority (Chinook salmon, estuaries, floodplains, freshwater quality, land cover and development, and summer stream flows).

Since this was consistent with the Partnership's requirements for the Ecosystem Recovery Plan, the LIO initially chose to focus the plan on the six very high priority Vital Signs as well as high priority Vital Signs (currently being determined), with an acknowledgement of the remaining lower priority Vital Signs.

In April 2016, Implementation Committee (IC) members were asked to provide feedback on the Vital Signs/components that were not previously identified as very high priority. These Vital Signs were prioritized during the March 14 IC meeting and further refined by the Executive Committee (EC) on March 31.

The compiled results shown on the next page were presented to the IC at their May 5 meeting for discussion. As a result of further discussion at that meeting, IC members moved seven vital signs up to the high priority and reduced the rankings from the four categories proposed by the Partnership (VH/H/M/L) down to three (H/M/L). The IC members clarified that the priority ratings reflected the group's understanding of components that are most threatened and where opportunities to address them currently exist.

IC members agreed that all of the identified components are important to long-term recovery of the Snohomish and Stillaguamish watersheds, and future adjustments to strategies will eventually address everything.

At this time, any final comments are requested from IC members. Comments will be presented at the June 16 IC meeting for discussion and recommendation to the EC.

Results of Initial IC Feedback and Discussion: Prioritizing Components and Vital Signs

High Priority	
<p>Chinook Salmon * ¹</p> <p>Floodplains *</p> <p>Estuaries * ²</p> <p>Land Development and Cover *</p> <p>Summer Stream Flow *</p> <p>Freshwater Quality * ³</p>	<p>Marine Shorelines and Nearshore</p> <p>Shoreline Armoring</p> <p>Freshwater Wetlands</p> <p>Marine Water Quality</p> <p>Good Governance</p> <p>Shellfish Beds ⁴</p> <p>Toxins in Fish</p>

Medium Priority	
<p>Onsite Sewage Systems ⁵</p> <p>Eelgrass ⁶</p>	<p>Drinking Water ⁷</p> <p>Marine Sediment Quality</p>

Low Priority	
<p>Sound Stewardship</p> <p>Pacific Herring ⁸</p> <p>Cultural Wellbeing</p> <p>Orcas</p> <p>Local Foods ⁹</p>	<p>Economic Vitality</p> <p>Sense of Place ¹⁰</p> <p>Birds</p> <p>Outdoor Activity ¹¹</p>

Notes:

- * Six components identified as very high priority in 2015
- 1 Includes other salmonids
- 2 Includes smaller streams, estuarine wetlands, tidal marshes, mudflats
- 3 Includes stormwater
- 4 Includes all classified commercial/recreational shellfish beds
- 5 Includes wastewater discharged to sewer systems, and municipal sewage
- 6 Includes other habitat-forming submerged vegetation (bull kelp, etc.)
- 7 Includes groundwater
- 8 Includes Pacific herring, surf smelt, sand lance, and other forage fish
- 9 Includes fish, shellfish, wild game, fowl, plants (but not farmed species/crops)
- 10 Includes shoreline access
- 11 Includes beaches and all nature-based recreation and work