

## Priority Components and Vital Signs

### *Process Summary*

In 2015, Snohomish-Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization (Sno-Stillly 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). Because 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 (being determined in 2016), with an acknowledgement of the remaining lower priority Vital Signs.

In March 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 discussed during the March 14 IC meeting and further refined by the Executive Committee (EC) on March 31. In April 2016, IC members began prioritizing the additional selected Vital Signs/components, and the compiled results were presented for discussion at the May 5 IC meeting. As a result of that discussion, IC members moved additional Vital Signs up to the high priority category and reduced the rankings from the four categories proposed by the Partnership (very high, high, medium, and low) down to three categories (high, medium, and low).

Following the May 5 IC meeting, members were asked to review the prioritized list with their organizations and provide final comments. Comments from IC members were presented at the June 16 IC meeting for discussion and comment/response resolution, resulting in a consensus decision to present the attached list to the EC for review and a decision on June 30.

### *Clarification of Prioritization Decisions*

The IC members clarified that the priority ratings reflect 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. Furthermore, the IC recognizes the strong link between human wellbeing and ecosystem health, and determined that most of the human health and human quality of life components would be best addressed alongside all of the ecosystem Vital Signs/components—embedded within the approach to each ecosystem component—rather than prioritized within the list of ecosystem components.

## Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Priority Components and Vital Signs

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

Medium Priority	
Marine Shorelines and Nearshore	Freshwater Wetlands
Onsite Sewage Systems <sup>5</sup>	Drinking Water <sup>7</sup>
Eelgrass <sup>6</sup>	Marine Sediment Quality

Low Priority	
Pacific Herring <sup>8</sup>	Birds
Orcas	Local Foods <sup>9</sup>

Human Health and Quality of Life Priority Linkages	
Good Governance	Economic Vitality
Cultural Wellbeing	Sense of Place <sup>10</sup>
Sound Stewardship	Outdoor Activity <sup>11</sup>

**Notes:**

- \* Six components identified as very high priority in 2015
- 1 Includes other salmonids
- 2 Includes smaller streams, estuarine wetlands, tidal marshes, and 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, and plants (but not farmed species/crops)
- 10 Includes shoreline access
- 11 Includes beaches and all nature-based recreation and work