



2011 Legislative Concept Paper
December 1, 2010

Puget 'SoundCorps' Jobs for Puget Sound Recovery

Issue DNR is committed to the state's goal to recover the Sound to health by 2020 and to its role in implementing the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda. In addition to many pollution prevention and habitat protection activities, recovery will require major investments in the remediation of damaged nearshore, riparian, and upland environments.

- DNR manages or has regulatory responsibility for about 41 percent of the uplands and submerged lands in the Puget Sound basin.
- DNR has long experience in protection and restoration programs and projects for saltwater, freshwater, upland habitat and water quality, as well as statutory requirements for certain restoration (road maintenance and abandonment), but the agency lacks the resources and Sound-wide framework to deliver projects that drive this work to a higher level of conservation to benefit Puget Sound.
- Public lands should be a showcase for Puget Sound-friendly actions and projects.

Background The unemployment rate for young people in Washington is, by some estimates, 37 percent, and veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan make up a significant portion of this alarming number. Multiple policy objectives can be achieved if **investments in Puget Sound recovery are coupled with a job creation program to employ youth and veterans to implement restoration projects that support the Puget Sound Action Agenda.** Consolidating the administration of several natural resource agencies' WCC programs would reform, prioritize and streamline project delivery and make most efficient use of state resources.



Multiple policy objectives can be achieved if **investments in Puget Sound recovery are coupled with a job creation program to employ youth and veterans to implement restoration projects that support the Puget Sound Action Agenda.** Consolidating the administration of several natural resource agencies' WCC programs would reform, prioritize and streamline project delivery and make most efficient use of state resources.

Proposal Through a major enhancement of an existing program, DNR proposes to amend the Washington Conservation Corps statute to create Puget "SoundCorps," composed of youth and returning veterans, and to consolidate administration of existing corps in the Department of Ecology. Puget SoundCorps would leverage federal funds to conduct saltwater and watershed restoration projects that support the Puget Sound Action Agenda, with a focus on those located on state and local government, port and other public lands. Sample SoundCorps activities and projects that implement the Puget Sound

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Action Agenda might include:

- ✓ Removing bulkheads and other shoreline structures that are damaging habitat and polluting Puget Sound and other beach cleanup projects;
- ✓ Restoring marine and nearshore habitat at toxic sediment cleanup sites;
- ✓ Repairing stream and streamside habitat damaged by unauthorized uses of public lands.
- ✓ Invasive species control;
- ✓ Stream-typing and inventorying fish passage barriers and other habitat and pollution issues, and assisting with the removal of barriers to fish passage;
- ✓ Inventorying and assisting with the repair or removal of forest roads that are polluting streams with sediment;
- ✓ Replanting damaged streamside areas; and
- ✓ Puget Sound recovery educational activities in coordination with PSP.

Fiscal Impact SoundCorps' exclusive focus on Puget Sound, emphasizing restoration on public lands, would leverage federal funding for the Sound's recovery. Federal appropriations for Puget Sound continue to increase, and a collaborative approach to implementation of the Action Agenda maximizes the effectiveness of federal and state dollars.

DNR seeks spending authority for federal funds and for state match from ALEA, ORV, ARRF, and general-fund local.



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