

*Environment Canada-
United States Environmental Protection Agency*

**Joint Statement of Cooperation
on the Georgia Basin and
Puget Sound Ecosystem**

**2004
*Action Plan and
Report on Progress***

May 7, 2004

1. INTRODUCTION

The three basins of Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia constitute the transboundary Georgia Basin - Puget Sound ecosystem. This ecosystem is one of the most ecologically diverse in North America, containing a wide range of internationally significant species and habitats. Residents of the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound region share a common airshed, common watersheds, a common flyway for migratory birds and habitat for anadromous fish, and common concerns over urban growth pressures. The Georgia Basin - Puget Sound ecosystem has a population of approximately 7 million with some projections envisioning an increase to over 9 million by the year 2020. Cooperative planning and management are important to achieving and maintaining sustainable ecosystems and communities in the face of continuing population and economic growth.

The Canadian and US federal governments have a unique responsibility to address the transboundary, transpacific and global environmental challenges confronting the future of this ecosystem. At the national level, agreements are in place between the two agencies for addressing issues such as climate change, air quality, and science and technology matters related to the control of pollution. Regionally, Environment Canada - Pacific Yukon Region (EC PYR) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-Region 10 have a long standing and successful relationship. This association has been the foundation for the creation of the *Joint Statement of Cooperation on the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound Ecosystem*, signed by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Minister of Environment Canada on January 19, 2000.

In addition to supporting national-level programs and priorities, the *Statement of Cooperation* (SOC) reinforces decades of collaborative activity at the federal, tribal, provincial-state and local levels through, for example, the work of the Fraser Basin Council, the Puget Sound Action Team, the BC-Washington Environmental Cooperation Council, the Greater Vancouver Regional District, and many others. Through the *Statement of Cooperation*, Environment Canada and the Environmental Protection Agency intend to build on the many worthwhile co-operative initiatives and excellent working relationships that have already been established nationally, regionally, and locally.

The *Statement of Cooperation*, which outlines common goals and objectives, is an important step in the evolution of ecosystem-based partnerships in the region as exemplified through programs such as the Georgia Basin Action Plan (GBAP) and the Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan. The SOC advocates a common framework for sustainability in the region. It promotes closer Canada-US collaboration in addressing the transboundary and global environmental challenges confronting the future of the ecosystem. Specifically, the *Statement of Cooperation* serves to:

- publicly confirm the commitment of the two federal levels of government;
- recognize the special role and interests of Georgia Basin – Puget Sound First Nations and Tribes;

- acknowledge and support the excellent efforts in our region related to ecosystem management; and
- establish a formal Canada-US mechanism at the regional level to act on the challenges of sustainability.

The *Statement of Cooperation* also commits Environment Canada and the Environmental Protection Agency to develop annual action plans and report to the public on progress. This current report represents the fourth *Statement of Cooperation* action plan and third progress report developed jointly by the two agencies in consultation with partners and stakeholders. The 2004 Annual Action Plan and Progress Report focuses on three priority areas for collaboration: 1) transboundary air quality, 2) sharing information and building consensus on ecosystem sustainability, and 3) engaging First Nations and Tribes. In addition to discussing these three priority areas, the 2004 Action Plan and Progress Report highlights opportunities for shared outreach and communication on important transboundary environmental issues while working to promote sustainable and healthy marine, terrestrial, and air ecosystems free of persistent toxics.

EC PYR and EPA Region 10 agree that the lessons learned and experiences generated through the *Statement of Cooperation* partnership should be applied to other transboundary regions shared by our two agencies, in addition to setting the stage for work in other priority areas such as water quality, toxics management, climate change, integrated data management, and sustainable development.

2. GOALS, REPORT ON PROGRESS, AND PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS FOR 2003-2004

The three goals, the Action Plan commitments agreed to in 2000-2001, a report on progress, and new priority action items for the upcoming year are:

2.1 Transboundary Air Quality

Goal: To achieve a greater understanding of transboundary air quality and airshed management in the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound ecosystem by facilitating closer collaboration on research and action among partners and stakeholders in the region.

2003 Report on Progress:

On May 14-15, 2003, EC PYR hosted the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound (GB/PS) International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee meeting in Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia. Tribes and First Nations were included among the participants in the meeting.

In June 2003 Canada's Environment Minister and the EPA Administrator announced plans to work on three pilot projects under the US-Canada Border Air Quality Strategy. One of the pilot projects is the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy (IAS). The IAS promotes opportunities for bi-national and multi-agency collaboration to address the most important air quality problems in the GB/PS airshed.

EPA Region 10 hosted the Northwest Collaborative Air Priorities Project (NW CAPP) event in SeaTac, WA on June 3 - 5, 2003. Representatives from industry, advocacy groups, Tribes, academia and government contributed to the consensus agreement on eight regional priorities for air quality. Delegates agreed to work together on fifteen high priority projects to address the regional priorities. Results of the NW CAPP event will be used as appropriate within the *Statement of Cooperation* (SOC) framework.

2002-2003 Action Plan Commitments

Support the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy (IAS) Coordinating Committee meetings and commitments.

Support airshed characterization, transboundary management models, and Transboundary Air Data Exchange (TRADE) as appropriate.

Host and facilitate the Northwest CAPP event.

Support on-going Georgia Basin - Puget Sound Tribal participation in the transboundary airshed management plan.

Develop a process to handle permit review information.

In November 2003 Environment Canada circulated for comment the draft report on the Airshed Characterization work. Early model results from the Airshed Characterization

demonstrate that transboundary flow exists between the GB/PS areas (across the US – Canada border in both directions) for both ozone precursors and particulate matter (PM). Transboundary Air Data Exchange (TRADE) analysis was used as part of the Airshed Characterization work described in the SOC and also links to the National Air Pollution Surveillance database.

International cooperation on efforts to reduce marine vessel emissions is ongoing. The GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee included discussions on how to engage the marine vessel industries in airshed planning. Both EPA and EC have contributed to the planning of an Air & Waste Management Association sponsored West Coast Region Conference on Marine Port Air Quality Impacts planned in Seattle in April 2004. EPA and EC have also participated in the States Marine Emission Reduction Group conference call sponsored by the California Air Resources Board.

Another important concern in addition to marine vessel emissions is the evaluation of new air emission sources. A working group on the review of new air emission sources presented a final report to the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee, and recommendations for sharing permit review information among the various agencies.

On October 29-30, 2003 EPA Region 10 and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency hosted a meeting of the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee in Seattle, WA. Tribes and First Nations were included among the meeting participants. Members of the committee reviewed the findings of the nearly completed Airshed Characterization. The committee established a workgroup for development of a draft IAS and agreed on the process, timeline, and path forward.

Future transboundary management models were discussed at both the March and October meetings. Discussion included the following potential management models:

- A federal framework with regional cooperation emphasising the reduction of marine vessel emissions and improvements in clean vehicles and fuels.
- A federal framework to address locally defined issues (e.g. potential inclusion of western North America in an annex to the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement).
- Maintain the *status quo*.
- A State/Provincial led agreement (e.g. under the BC/WA Environmental Cooperation Council) with federal participation.
- The International Joint Commission (IJC) process.

The Georgia Basin - Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy (IAS) website was completed in October 2003 and is available on-line (<http://www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/airshed>). This website serves as a Clearinghouse for information on the shared airshed and the partner agencies involved in the development of the IAS.

On December 3, 2003 regional staff attended the US-Canada Air Quality Committee (AQC) Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Environment Canada provided an update on the GB/PS IAS. Region 10 and EC PYR received confirmation from the AQC that they would consult with regional staff regarding particulate matter (PM) issues.

2004 Action Plan Commitments for Transboundary Air Quality:

Significant commitments and next steps agreed to by EC PYR and EPA Region 10 include:

- Continue leading the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee process with Environment Canada hosting the next Committee meeting in March 2004.
- Evaluate the co-benefits, in reduced greenhouse gas emissions, that can be gained from actions to reduce air pollution emissions through the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy (IAS).
- Complete a draft GB/PS International Airshed Strategy (IAS) and share the draft report with the respective headquarters offices in Washington, D.C. and Ottawa.
- Identify additional research needs related to the Airshed Characterization. Work will be used to inform management actions for the IAS.
- Evaluate the IAS and Airshed Characterization results to determine how the Pacific Northwest region's air concerns would be included in the AQC's plans regarding any annex to the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement that would include western North America.
- Host a marine vessel emission workshop in Seattle on April 2004. The meeting will include GB/PS IAS Coordinating Committee members, other EPA and EC staff interested in the work, and representatives from the marine vessel industries and ports. Workshop results may include recommendations on methods to reduce marine vessel emissions. The workshop will inform the SOC and others on how important the reduction of marine vessel emissions is to achieving air quality in the GB/PS and if they should be an explicit element in the IAS strategy.
- Continue to support on-going Georgia Basin - Puget Sound First Nation and Tribal participation in the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy Coordinating Committee process.

2.2 Sharing Information and Building Consensus on Sustainability

Goal: To provide residents and decision makers in the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound region with information on Smart Growth/Sustainable Development issues by developing and/or identifying forums and mechanisms to share information.

2003 Report on Progress:

Theme A) - Assisting in the exchange of and access to technical information, tools, and best management practices and approaches for advancing ecosystem protection:

In 2003, EC PYR, EPA Region 10 and the Puget Sound Action Team (PSAT) have worked together extensively and supported the exchange of ideas, information, tools, and best management practices on sustainability and smart growth.

The Georgia Basin – Puget Sound Research Conference held in Vancouver, BC from March 31 - April 3, 2003 was a highly successful venue for the exchange of important information, knowledge, and approaches to protecting and managing the regional ecosystem. Attendees included an international and multidisciplinary group of over 800 university and government scientists, Coast Salish First Nations and Tribal representatives, regional politicians, students and community leaders. This conference provided a venue to share knowledge and information on important issues such as climate change impacts and adaptation, watershed hydrology, threats to marine resources, environmental contaminants, transboundary air quality, indicator development and collaborative management approaches. The conference was co-chaired by EC PYR and the PSAT with significant support from EPA Region 10 and other contributing agencies and organizations. Conference proceedings can be found at the PSAT website: <http://www.psat.wa.gov/Publications/2003research/RC2003.htm>

EPA and EC PYR have been investigating interagency information networking approaches to make environmental information more readily accessible and interactive. The ongoing goal is to assist in the sharing and transfer of fundamentally important technical information. EPA has continued to work with the PSAT to explore the use of RAINS (Rapid Access Information Networking System) to share related information and assessments from a range of sources.

2002-2003 Action Plan Commitments

Collaborate to provide better web-based access to resource information, planning approaches, best management practices, tools and demonstration projects.

Provide more integrated access to data via RAINS.

Identify, profile, and support demonstration projects containing smart growth and low-impact development and complete a one-year workplan.

Ensure that these indicators are accessible through a web-based communication and network strategy.

Support transboundary indicators work.

Theme B) - Watershed protection, smart growth, and low impact development

demonstration projects:

Under the work plan, pilot demonstration projects were to be identified and/or developed and broadly shared across the basin. The criteria for federal involvement in the pilot projects included:

- identification of key watersheds in the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound;
- continued development of an inventory of case studies and best practices;
- identification of key pilot projects for strategic and proactive engagement by EC and EPA.

The criteria for selecting demonstration projects include the following:

- those that emphasize the collection of performance data at the site, neighbourhood and watershed scales;
- examples of local watershed assessments leading to smarter land-use decisions;
- examples of land use and development that use low impact concepts and techniques;
- focus groups with practitioners to help identify successes and failures through the implementation and monitoring phases.

The Chico Watershed was one demonstration project identified as an example of Smart Growth and sustainable development. This project evaluated alternative future scenarios, low impact development, and watershed protection. It served as a case study and demonstration project and was presented at the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound Research Conference. The American Planning Association recently cited the project with an award for being one of the most progressive environmental plans in 2003.

“Smart Growth on the Ground” initiative was another project identified and supported as a demonstration pilot project in applying Smart Growth principles to a development project. “Smart Growth on the Ground” is a multiyear initiative in partnership with the University of British Columbia, specifically the James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Liveable Environments and the Real Estate Institute of British Columbia (BC). The project uses an integrated roundtable design model to incorporate sustainable planning and design principles and concepts as the basis for building three to five new retrofitted sustainable communities in BC.

Theme C) - facilitating the design, development and reporting of transborder sustainability indicators:

The Georgia Basin – Puget Sound Ecosystem Indicator Working Group (referred to henceforth as Working Group) has just initiated work towards the production of a second report to be released in early 2005. The Working Group met several times, most recently in June 2003, to develop a work plan for the second report. The Working Group has selected five topical areas from which to develop the next set of indicators. These areas are: (1) surface water quality; (2) marine water quality; (3) shellfish health; (4) water use and appropriation; and (5) land use patterns. The six indicators* published in the first report will also be updated, where possible. This first report can be found at: <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/cppl/gbpsei/index.html>

A “Terms of Reference” document for the Working Group has been developed and approved at the executive level. Signatories include Environment Canada, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, BC Ministry of Water, Air and Land Protection, and Washington State’s Puget Sound Action Team. The Terms of Reference outlines the membership, objectives, procedures, intended deliverables, and issues that must be affirmatively addressed by the Working Group.

The Working Group has elected to form an informal advisory group in which a broader range of expertise, perspective, and skills will be developed to amplify the indicator report’s scope, style, tone and eventual use as a decision-making tool for all levels of audience. Areas of potential skills include media arts, communication, technical writing, community representation, social sciences, and topic-specific sciences related to the indicators selected.

The Environmental Cooperation Council (ECC) was briefed on indicator topic selection for the next report at their Vancouver meeting in March 2003. The Spring 2002 Indicators Report, released in March of that year, was presented at the ECC meeting and several workshops, and regional and international conferences. In June 2003, the report was presented at the Making Ecosystem Connections: Partnerships for a Restored Okanagan Basin Habitat conference held in Penticton, BC.

* 1) population, 2) air quality from inhaled particulates, 3) solid waste, 4) persistent organic pollutants in harbour seals, 5) species at risk, and 6) terrestrial protected areas

2004 Action Plan Commitments for Smart Growth/Sustainability:

Theme A) - Assisting in the exchange of and access to technical information, tools, and best management practices and approaches for advancing ecosystem protection:

- Facilitate information exchange on smart growth and watershed protection by continuing to network and link existing websites.
- Continue to engage federal agencies to participate on the toxic contaminant work groups of the PS/GB International Task Force.
- Help support implementation of the Transboundary Toxic Workgroup recommendations which will be available in late 2004.
- Continue to work with RAINS as an interagency information-networking platform and explore opportunities to demonstrate RAINS to Canadian audiences.
- Support the development of a general spatial data organizing framework, through PSAT and The Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project to help further define the hierarchical scales, general units of assessment, and information sharing and integration approaches
- EPA will use its own web page to better advocate the sharing and use of information to improve ecosystem protection within the PS/GB.

Theme B) - Watershed protection, smart growth, and low impact development demonstration projects:

- Emphasize the promotion and use of PS/GB Research Conference proceedings in identifying best available science and practices.
- Collaborate with EPA's Office of Research and Development to host an information sharing and project scoping meeting in autumn 2004 to initiate discussions on a *Puget Sound-Georgia Basin Alternative Futures Demonstration Project* aimed at examining and contrasting the possible future fates of this shared international ecosystem.
- Continue scoping discussions regarding the agencies' involvement in future pilot or demonstration projects. Particular attention will be given to both tribal and municipal scale projects and will emphasize cross-jurisdictional watershed applications. Objectives and criteria for involvement in the demonstrations will be further evaluated as the needs and capabilities of our partners evolve.

Theme C) - Facilitating the design, development and reporting of transborder sustainability indicators:

Statement of Cooperation partners plan to continue to support the transboundary indicator process with the view to keeping federal, provincial and state efforts aligned and all key agencies participating. The Transboundary Indicator Workgroup has proposed developing a second round report in early 2005. EPA, PSAT, and EC PYR have secured funding to support report development and possibly production costs for the 2005-report release. Indicator development teams will be notified with a proposed project schedule and requested to begin scoping their respective indicators. EC PYR and EPA Region 10 will co-chair the GB/PS Transboundary Indicator Workgroup.

2.3 Engaging First Nations and Tribes

Goal: To facilitate the participation of First Nations and Tribes in setting future priorities for action in the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound ecosystem.

2003 Report on Progress:

On March 26-27, 2003 the EPA Region 10 Tribal Office hosted a meeting for US Tribes in the designated Puget Sound boundary. Material was presented on the SOC and NW CAPP. The conference was a government-to-government forum designed to allow Tribal Leaders and their staff discussion with EPA's Deputy Regional Administrator regarding their interest and opinions about the SOC and NW CAPP. The Makah, Swinomish and Snoqualmie Tribes contributed to discussions regarding this section of the SOC. The Tribes presented 1) potential opportunities and 2) changes to the language of this SOC focus area to EPA's Deputy Regional Administrator.

2002-2003 Action Plan Commitments

Conduct respective outreach efforts with individual Tribes and First Nation bands to engage Coast Salish Tribal leaders in the activities of the SOC

Support Tribal and First Nation participation at the GB/PS Research Conference

Host a 'Roundtable' meeting between EPA, EC, First Nations and Tribes in the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound region

Support the Coast Salish Sea Initiative through GBEI

Uphold the government-to-government relationship with US-EPA and US Tribes

Support forum between First Nations leaders and the Georgia Basin Action Team as part of the GBEI

The Georgia Basin - Puget Sound Research Conference held in Vancouver on March 31-April 3, 2003 solicited and received significant participation in the planning and delivery of the conference from the Coast Salish. Several GB/PS Tribe and First Nation members attended the conference and presented papers on a number of issues of direct importance to them including shellfish remediation, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

The Sto:lo First Nation hosted the Coast Salish Traditional Knowledge Conference in Abbotsford, British Columbia November 5-6, 2003. The conference brought together a number of Coast Salish leaders and environmental specialists to discuss the importance of traditional knowledge and how to best incorporate this knowledge with traditional western science when planning environmental strategies for the GB/PS. The Conference was very successful and highlighted the importance of including the following in SOC plans:

- local characterization of historic, beneficial and traditional uses;
- tribal health concerns associated with contaminated water and subsistence resources;
- discussions of emerging approaches for integrating traditional knowledge and

use into contemporary resource management decisions in a manner that respects tribal sovereignty and self determination.

Plans to host a June 2003 'roundtable' meeting with key EC PYR and EPA Region 10 Executives, Tribal Leaders and Elders from the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound, and SOC staff were postponed. The goal of setting future Tribal and First Nations priorities for action in the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound ecosystem still remains a priority. The mechanism to solicit input from Tribes and First Nations and how to share that input with EC and EPA management will need to be evaluated to maintain and respond to Tribal sovereignty. EC relations with First Nations and EPA relations with Tribes are well respected and the SOC team will continue to search for an approach where all parties can work together while respecting government protocol.

EPA Tribal Office staff met with the Makah Tribe and Swinomish Tribe in November 2003 to begin discussions and planning a 'priorities' conference to be hosted by both tribes. Efforts are ongoing at EPA Region 10 to find funding to support a tribally led conference in 2004-2005.

EC PYR continues to support the Coast Salish Sea Initiative through the Georgia Basin Action Plan. Environment Canada filled a First Nation liaison position to assist with the efforts to support the Coast Salish Sea Initiative through the Georgia Basin Action Plan. This liaison position provides an important role of bridging outreach and communication gaps between EC PYR and First Nations in the GB/PS region. The liaison is also working with EPA staff to provide important connections and experience from a First Nations perspective.

2004 Action Plan Commitments for Engaging Tribes/First Nations:

Efforts will be made to seek input from Tribes and First Nations regarding their needs for ecosystem protection. All Tribes and First Nations that call the Georgia Basin - Puget Sound their home will be consulted, if they wish, with regards to the work under the SOC.

The following list provides the action items for 2004:

- Facilitate a meeting of Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Tribes and First Nations to determine their interest in setting priorities for action that reflect their community concerns regarding the ecosystem.
- Host a second Coast Salish Traditional Ecological Knowledge Conference (TEKC) on the U.S. side of the border to continue the excellent work started by the Sto:lo Nation. EPA would provide assistance to a Tribe through the SOC and Tribal Office mechanisms to host the 2nd TEKC in 2005. TEKC would include participant and attendees from the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound region.
- Engage Georgia Basin/Puget Sound First Nations and Tribes in the SOC work elements. Encourage and support the exchange of ideas and work related to ecosystem management and protection between First Nations and Tribes while providing opportunities for collaborations across the border.

3. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Communication and outreach activities continue under *Statement of Cooperation*.

- The Georgia Basin - Puget Sound Research Conference was held in Vancouver, BC Canada on March 31- April 3, 2003. During this Conference, the Georgia Basin Action Plan was launched as a five year extension of ecosystem-based programming in the Georgia Basin.
- Two pivotal SOC team-working meetings were held in July and December of 2003 in Seattle, WA. These meeting allow all three task areas to report on progress and consult on direction and strategy in context of the larger SOC integrated work. These meeting also allow staff an opportunity to give feedback to the SOC managers on communication ideas and gaps where management can help integrate and support task work.
- SOC members created a 'deck' presentation for use in presenting information to various audiences interested in the work.
- EPA and EC staff had several working group meetings to keep the SOC work on track and make adjustments according to events. Communication materials were also developed at these meetings.
- Representatives from both EPA Region 10 and EC PYR contributed professional support to the joint class at the University Of Washington, University of Western Washington, and the University of British Columbia on the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin: Managing an International Ecosystem.

Recognizing the need to better communicate the goals and activities of the *Statement of Cooperation* to other agencies and the general public, EPA Region 10 and EC PYR intend to continue to communicate broadly as part of our Annual Action Plan for 2004. The purpose of this communication exercise will be to outline our respective mandates and business line priorities, highlight the uniqueness of the region and the threats to residents' quality of life, and introduce the *Statement of Cooperation* and the commitment of EPA and EC to work with others in finding shared solutions to common environmental problems. Components of these communication efforts are to:

- Continue to support linkages with universities including providing support and participation in the joint University of Washington and University of British Columbia course entitled "Puget Sound/Georgia Basin: Protecting and Managing an International Ecosystem", as well as the public lecture series planned in conjunction with the course
- Support planning the next Traditional Knowledge Conference for Georgia Basin – Puget Sound Tribes and First Nations.
- Represent Pacific Northwest viewpoints at strategic meeting in Washington, D.C. and Ottawa as needed (i.e. Air Quality Committee meetings).

4. ENHANCING THE EPA-EC PARTNERSHIP

EPA and EC agree that the partnership arrangement developed under the *Statement of Cooperation* has served to strengthen and energized an already excellent working relationship at the regional level. Our on-going work in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound Ecosystem provides a template for the interactions between our two agencies, and guides our approach and actions throughout the entire shared region. To help facilitate our broader relationship, we have established an EPA (Region 10) and EC (PYR) Working Group with the view to ensuring continued successful collaborations. This Working Group will report to the EPA and EC regional Executive Teams, which will meet jointly a minimum of once a year.

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