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Successes and lessons learned: supporting organizations' capacity to protect and restore Puget Sound

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Local Capacity Funding in the Puget Sound National Estuary Program

Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference: April 6th, 2018

Presented by Taylor Biaggi – Environmental Protection Agency



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1. “Bottom-up” and “top-down” roles in large ecosystem and conservation efforts
2. Roles within the Puget Sound Effort
3. Strengths of the “bottom-up” role
4. Further examining the existing models of “bottom-up” capacity
5. Supporting the “bottom-up” perspective

Outline

Puget Sound

- Puget Sound has over 2,000 miles of marine shorelines
- 4.8 million people
- 19 major watersheds
- 100+ local governments
- 19 tribal governments
- Large ports, industries, and critical military installations
- \$365 GDP in 2016
- Only a portion of the larger transboundary Salish Sea

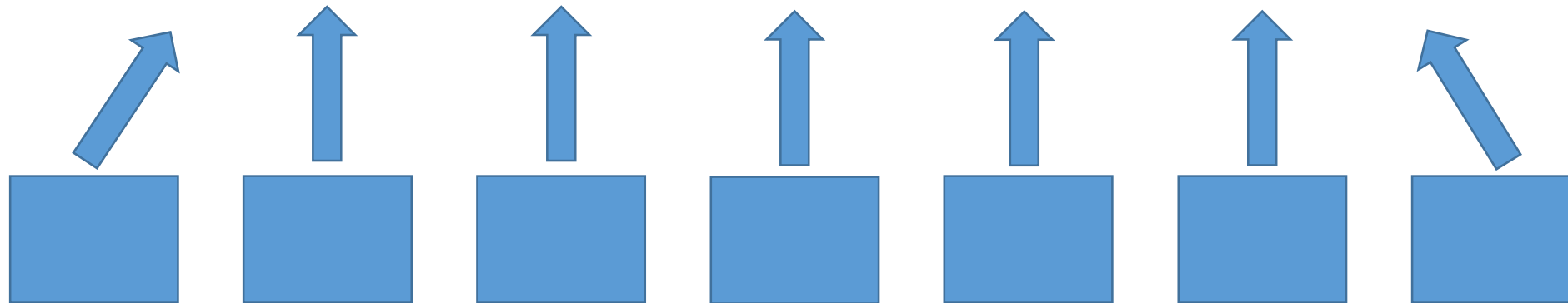
The work of protecting and restoring Puget Sound in a coordinated way across these many local interests and jurisdictions and the role of local participation and leadership cannot be understated

“Bottom-up” and “top-down” roles are both important in large ecosystem restoration and conservation efforts

Regional/“top-down” role



Common Goals Achieved



Local/“bottom-up” role

Advantages:

- Impartial
- Broad thinking
- Consistent
- Backbone function

Advantages:

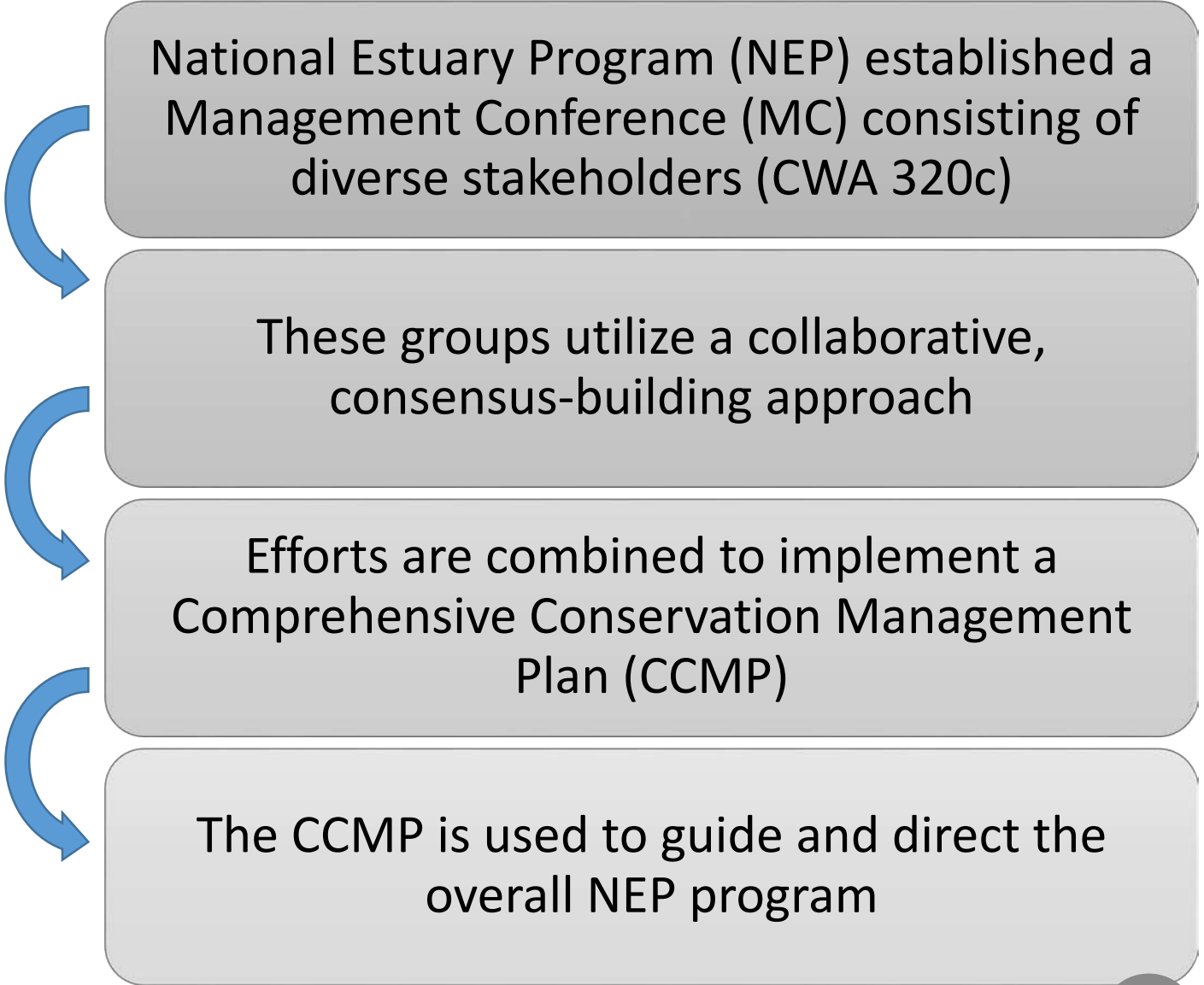
- Local knowledge
- Committed
- Agile

“We took our own initiative to develop salmon recovery plans that came from the bottom up, not the top down. As Governor, I am proud of this tradition and call it working together ‘The Washington Way.’”

– Governor Christine Gregoire

“The balance of evidence from the commons literature of the past few decades is that neither purely local-level management nor purely higher level management works well by itself. Rather, there is a need to design and support management institutions at more than one level, with attention to interactions across scale from the local level up” (Ostrom, 2002).

National Estuary Program and Management Conference



National Estuary Program (NEP) established a Management Conference (MC) consisting of diverse stakeholders (CWA 320c)

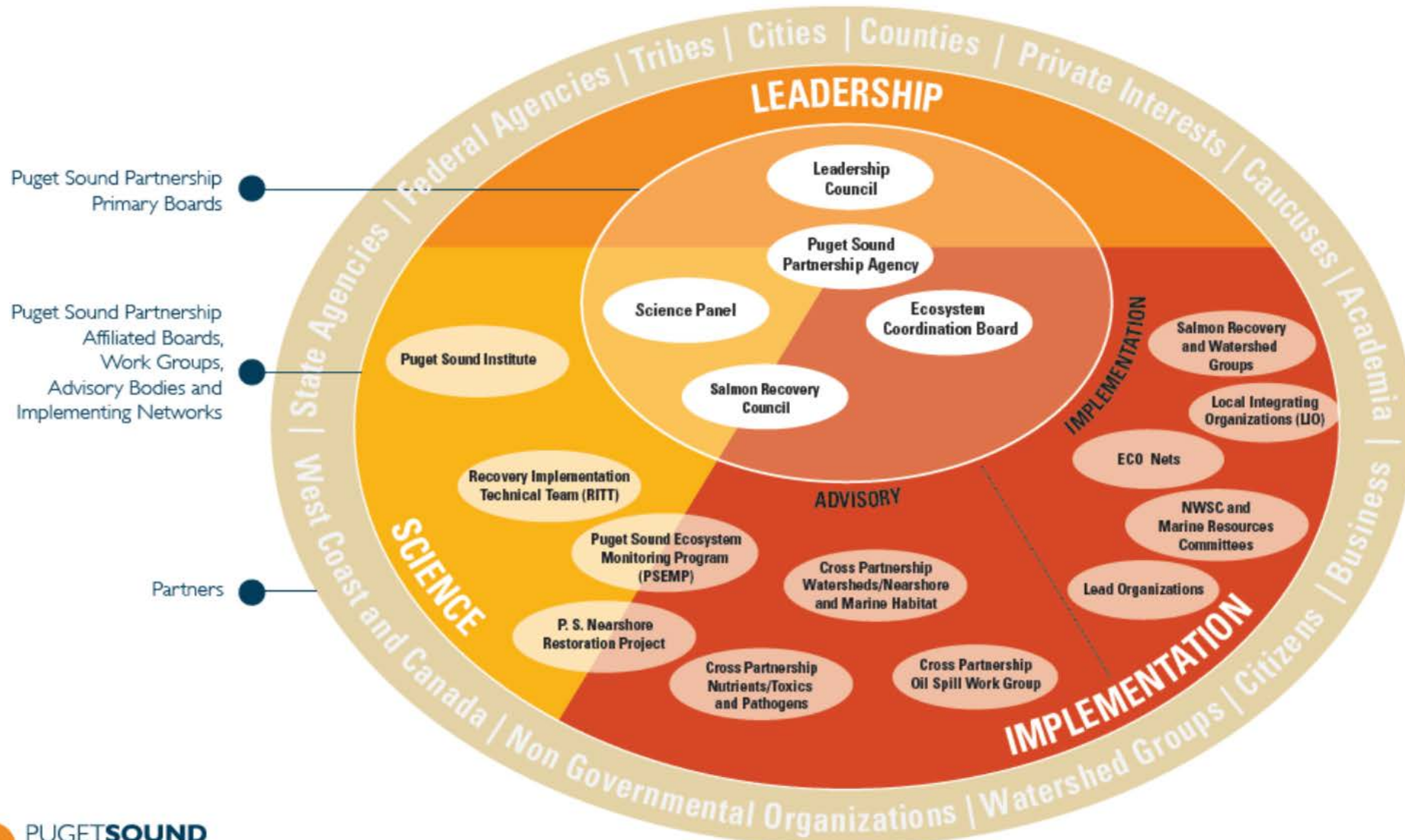
These groups utilize a collaborative, consensus-building approach

Efforts are combined to implement a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP)

The CCMP is used to guide and direct the overall NEP program

PUGET SOUND PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM OF ORGANIZATION AND PARTNER STRUCTURE



First efforts at supporting the capacity of bottom-up voices provide great lessons and insight regarding both the value of bottom-up roles and how to best support them

- Puget Sound tribal capacity program was provided to support tribal engagement in the Puget Sound effort and Action Agenda
- Each of the 19 federally recognized tribes and three authorized consortia of these tribes received support

In reviewing the workplans for the 22 recipients of tribal capacity support over a 5-year period:

- 15 recipients participated in local processes such as Shoreline and Growth Management Act forums
- 17 engaged in regional salmon recovery and Action Agenda meetings
- 21 engaged in collecting or providing data, traditional knowledge, or other information to local and regional processes
- 4 engaged in creating tribal mechanisms relating to tribal environmental priorities in Puget Sound



Skokomish Estuary. Photo: Taylor Biaggi

“The ability to participate in these forums has provided the [Tribe] the ability to communicate its positions and needs to affect change in the system. [The Tribe] is geographically situated where the impacts from the entire Salish Sea impacts our resources and treaty rights. This project has allowed us to work with entities throughout Puget Sound to adopt behaviors and actions that address our concerns” (Final Report PA 00J331-01).

In 2014/2015, EPA grant project officers conducted brief interviews with tribal recipients. Notable thoughts gathered include:

Grantees highlighted their tribe's abilities to represent their tribe's and broader tribal rights and interests

A critical role of the work under this program ensures that tribes are meaningfully engaged and appropriately recognized as sovereign governments that retain treaty reserved rights and resources

Tribes highlighted their ability to maintain sustained contributions of technical expertise, leadership, and data to local forums

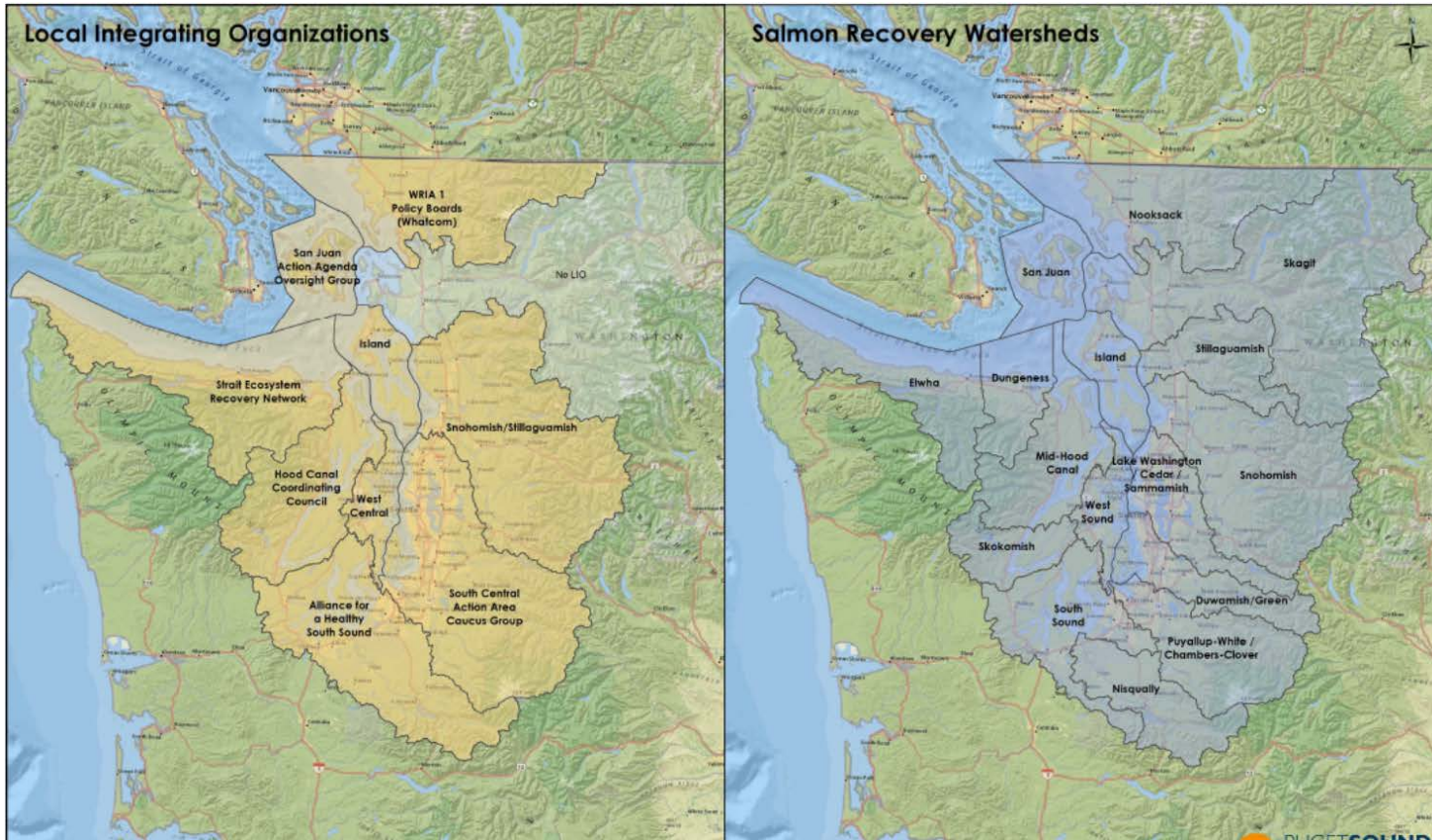
As part of the 2014/2015 process, EPA Project Officers sought to learn from grantees reflections, lessons learned, and challenges associated with the tribal capacity program, we gathered:

Grantees universally highly valued this program and the strong contributions to Puget Sound protection it helped them make, though a number of recipients noted the administrative burden associated with grant management

A number of recipients recognized and affirmed the importance of engagement at the regional level, and the importance for tribes to be heard at that level

Recipients expressed challenges related to engaging in the regional, “top-down” forums, processes, and frameworks, noting that engagement in established local forums (e.g., salmon recovery and other forums), is an effective use of this support

Finally, a number of recipients expressed interest in gaining a greater understanding of the Management Conference and National Estuary Program



Local Integrating Organizations

- Grassroots level structure formed to bolster consensus and momentum around local recovery actions

The Northwest Straits Commission

- Seven county-based Marine Resource Groups (MRCs) to facilitate regional coordination

Salmon Recovery Council and Salmon Recovery Lead Entities

- Representatives from each of the 14 watershed areas, environmental and business community, tribes, state and federal agencies develop guidance and advise the Leadership Council on salmon recovery decisions

Further examining models of “bottom-up” capacity

Looking
towards
outstanding
“bottom-up”
and “top-
down”
collaboration

Capacity support has enabled strong local and sub-regional voices to be a part of the conversation

Including local context is critical in large scale ecosystem management.

We have had a valuable opportunity to examine and reflect on a 2010-2014 EPA Puget Sound tribal capacity program, learning several ways to strengthen our support of this engagement, such as reducing administrative burden and fostering mutual awareness of grantee work

Based on this preliminary research and exploration, we believe that we have an opportunity to further examine and foster effective collaboration between the “bottom-up” and “top-down” roles.

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