DRAFT

POCAC BUDD INLET SUBCOMMITTEE

Policy Statements, Strategies, and Work Plan for Budd Inlet Restoration

Introduction

Budd Inlet, the southernmost part of the Puget Sound, Washington, is a vital ecological, recreational and economic resource that supports a diverse range of benefits for the local community. Restoring the ecological values of Budd Inlet will improve water quality and natural habitats, preserve sediment quality and promote a healthy marine environment. This document outlines the POCAC's Budd Inlet subcommittee's proposed work plan for 2025 and policies, objectives, and strategy recommendations to the Commission for restoring Budd Inlet to a sustainable and thriving ecosystem. This report is intended to be implemented in a manner consistent with the Port of Olympia's mission and Port Peninsula Integrated Master Plan (PPIMP).

Although the Subcommittee's primary focus was on the Port's role in restoration of Budd Inlet's marine waters, we recognize that Budd Inlet is part of an integrated ecosystem that historically was the Deschutes River estuary and the traditional home of the Squaxin Island Tribe – *People of the Water.*

Policy

Restoration of Budd Inlet is central to the Port of Olympia's efforts to protect and enhance the aquatic environment in concert with its PPIMP~~Master Plan~~ for the Port's marine waters. The Budd Inlet Subcommittee proposes the following as the Port's policy regarding Budd Inlet cleanup:

- Preserve and restore natural habitats to support biodiversity.
- Improve water quality to ensure a healthy aquatic ecosystem.
- Engage and collaborate with local communities, stakeholders, and tribes.
- Implement sustainable and science-based restoration practices.
- Provide opportunities for public access and recreational opportunities
- Monitor and evaluate project progress to ensure long-term success.

Objectives

The Budd Inlet Subcommittee proposes that the primary objectives of the Budd Inlet restoration project include:

- Community Engagement: Foster a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between the Deschutes Estuary and Budd Inlet restoration efforts and projects.
- Sediment Quality Restoration: Ensure that sediment remediation minimizes impacts to the benthic community, including prioritizing natural recovery over dredging.
- Habitat Restoration: Ensure existing marine habitats are protected and rehabilitate degraded habitats to support native species and enhance ecological resilience.
- Water Quality Improvement: Support regional efforts to reduce pollutants and invasive species from entering the Deschutes River and Budd Inlet through comprehensive management practices, including point source and nonpoint pollution control measures.
- Sustainable Practices: Promote the use of environmentally sensitive restoration techniques, such as dredging and disposal sites that minimize environmental impacts ,~~and~~ maximize sustainable public infrastructure, with full consideration for and integration of projected sea level rise for the project area, and beyond.
- Long-term Monitoring: Establish a robust monitoring program to ensure pollutants do not degrade Budd Inlet sediments and water quality, track restoration progress, assess ecosystem health, and adapt management strategies as needed.

Strategies

To achieve these objectives, the Budd Inlet Subcommittee recommends following the strategies in the Port's long-range planning and operations.

1. Habitat Restoration

- Wetland Restoration: Support efforts to restore and expand wetland and intertidal areas to improve water filtration and provide wildlife and aquatic habitat.
- Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation: Conduct a study to determine feasibility of restoring eelgrass beds and woody debris in intertidal zones.
- Riparian Zone Enhancement: Re-establish native vegetation along shorelines to stabilize banks, reduce erosion, improve salmon habitat, and create buffer zones for nutrient and sediment filtration.

2. Water Quality Improvement

- Pollution Control: Implement best management practices (BMPs) to control nonpoint runoff, urban stormwater, and wastewater discharge.
- Source Reduction: Work with local industries and municipalities to reduce the release of harmful substances into the watershed.
- Public Education: Educate the public about the importance of water quality and encourage practices that reduce pollution at the source.

3. Community Engagement

- Stakeholder Collaboration: Partner with local communities, businesses, environmental groups, and tribes to foster collaborative restoration efforts.
- Volunteer Programs: Create opportunities for community members to participate in restoration activities, such as planting native vegetation, shellfish restoration and monitoring water quality.

- Educational Initiatives: Develop educational programs and resources for schools and the general public to raise awareness and promote stewardship.

4. Sustainable Practices

- Green Infrastructure: Promote the use of green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, permeable pavements, and bioswales, to manage stormwater and reduce runoff.
- Low-impact Development: Encourage development practices that minimize environmental impact and preserve natural landscapes.
- Conservation Incentives: Provide incentives for landowners and developers to adopt sustainable practices and protect critical habitats.
- Ensure all Port infrastructure projects consider future sea rise and are compatible with local sea rise resiliency plans and continue active participation in the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Collaborative.

5. Long-term Monitoring

- Monitoring Programs: Establish comprehensive monitoring programs to assess and quantify new classes of contaminants, effectiveness of restoration efforts, track key indicators of aquatic health and habitat conditions.
- Adaptive Management: Use monitoring data to inform adaptive management strategies and make necessary adjustments to restoration activities.
- Reporting and Transparency: Ensure transparency by regularly reporting progress and outcomes to stakeholders and the public.

Budd Inlet Work Plan and Deliverables for 2025

Purpose: Foster a better understanding in support of the Port of Olympia's Mission and restoration projects.

1. Storyboard Maps: The sub-committee, in consultation with the Port, will prepare a consolidated and interactive project map series or storyboard that depicts the Deschutes River, Capitol Lake and Budd Inlet.

   The goal is to show the common marine boundaries of the Port's marine waterfront, Olympia's waterfront and current freshwater boundaries south of 5th Avenue Dam (Capitol Lake & Deschutes River to Tumwater Falls). The interactive map would show locations of proposed and planned projects, and the areas of influence. Links on the storyboard would address potential impacts on Budd Inlet, timing of projects, and how specific projects interact with other projects. This interactive map would allow the public to grasp the Port's overall efforts to improve water quality, remediate contaminated sediments, restore nearshore and marine habitats, and infrastructure improvements in cooperation with the area's marine waterfront.

2. Public Communication: The sub-committee proposes to prepare a communication plan, in consultation with the Port, to provide accurate, transparent, and comprehensive information to the community about proposed Budd Inlet projects and their interaction with the Deschutes Estuary project.

The goal is to foster better understanding of the design features, their purpose, financing, and governance issues as waterfront and restoration projects proceed. Major project milestones, timing, policy issues and decisions by the Port Commission and the larger community should be presented and tracked on a publicly available digital platform. Once developed the Port would take the lead tracking their projects and adjacent waterfront properties. Access would be provided to tribes, city, and state entities to track projects on the platform. This information would provide transparency to assist in public understanding, the interlinking roles, and the breath and scale of proposed and planned projects.

3. Dredging and Disposal of Dredged Material: As more definitive plans to address sediment contamination in Budd Inlet are completed, including dredging of contaminated sediments and sediments suitable for beneficial use the POCAC, in consultation with the Port, will seek public input through public forums. The forums will solicit public views on the pros and cons of the proposed restoration, dredging and disposal, and alternative solutions. Following the conclusion of the public input the Budd Inlet Subcommittee will prepare draft recommendations to the POCAC committee for consideration as recommendations to the Commission.

   The goal is to seek public input and acceptance of an action plan for dredging of sediments and dredged material disposal sites and subsequent use.

Attached are the working papers of the Budd Inlet Restoration Subcommittee. This information frames some of the issues facing the Port of Olympia marine operations and the other proposed and planned projects in the lower Deschutes, Capital Lake and Budd Inlet.