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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **NOAA and Co-Signers Release *Sound Science* to Washington Governor**

Scientists from 12 organizations committed to protecting Puget Sound today presented Washington Governor Chris Gregoire with *Sound Science*, an innovative report about the Puget Sound ecosystem and ways that science can inform recovery decisions.

“Puget Sound looks beautiful on its surface but beneath that it is sick, and in some places, dying. Cleaning up Puget Sound is a top state environmental priority, but we can't go it alone,” said Governor Gregoire. “*Sound Science* is a valuable contribution towards the state's recovery efforts.”

Representatives from 12 federal, state, local, tribal, non-governmental and academic institutions joined the governor in Olympia, Wash., in a ceremony to officially release *Sound Science*, the first collaborative science report to take an ecosystem view of the Sound. Over 30 authors from a dozen regional institutions and more than 100 reviewers contributed to the report.

The extent of collaboration and diversity of contributors is unusual in science reports – and shows how committed the region's scientists and scientific institutions are to working together for the recovery of the Puget Sound ecosystem.

“The uniquely collaborative effort underpinning *Sound Science* reflects a wealth of scientific knowledge from both experts and the public and supports the broad ecosystem effort in Puget Sound,” said Usha Varanasi, special science advisor to the governor for the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) and Director of NOAA Fisheries' Northwest Fisheries Science Center.

The report, formally titled “*Sound Science: Synthesizing Ecological and Socioeconomic Information about the Puget Sound Ecosystem*,” highlights key biological and physical features of the region, important threats facing Puget Sound, gaps in scientific knowledge, and illustrates how information from both natural and social sciences can support good management decisions.

“We've reached a point where the things we want from the region—housing, waste disposal, clean seafood—are in conflict with each other. This is precisely the kind of document that we have needed to incorporate all those factors,” said Bill Ruckelshaus, PSP co-chair. “It represents the best available scientific information on the Puget Sound ecosystem, and the authors and contributors should be highly commended for their work.”

“We firmly believe that collaborative efforts such as the development of this report are important to successfully recovering the Puget Sound ecosystem and are proud to be partners in this effort” said Billy Frank, Chairman, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.

*Sound Science* reports five key findings:

- A whole ecosystem understanding is needed to support complex management decisions that involve trade-offs between alternative ecosystem goals.
- Human health is inextricably linked to the ocean and broader ecosystem health.
- Marine and fresh waters in the Puget Sound are under stress- and these stresses will increase as global climate changes.
- Population growth and patterns of land use and development are degrading the ecosystem, waste disposal and other uses are increasing demands on the ecosystem.
- Ecosystem food webs and functions have been significantly altered, causing changes in the ecosystem’s goods and services that are not completely understood.

The report emphasizes that understanding the linkages between human and natural systems is critical to support ecologically and socially sound decisions, develop proactive strategies to reverse or halt declines in Puget Sound health, prioritize science funding and choose cost-effective actions.

The signers expect that *Sound Science* will complement several regional efforts, including Governor Gregoire’s initiative via the PSP to restore a healthy Puget Sound by the year 2020 and a comprehensive ecosystem plan to be developed under the auspices of the PSP.

Other related regional efforts include the Puget Sound Action Team’s *State of the Sound 2007* and *2007 Puget Sound Update*, also released today, that provide the most current scientific status on the health of the Puget Sound and status of its marine life, habitats, water quality and climate. *State of the Sound 2007* tracks more than two dozen environmental indicators—from eelgrass and Orcas to stream flow and oil spills—to provide insight into the current condition of Puget Sound, threats to its resources and emerging trends.

Puget Sound is an important resource within the Pacific Northwest and the Nation – it is the Nation’s second largest estuary, supporting over four million residents and a diversity of fish and wildlife populations, including iconic species such as Orca whales and Pacific salmon. The Sound also plays a vital role in supporting the economy, sustaining industries such as commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, tourism, shipping and transportation.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation’s coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with our federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global Earth observation network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

**On the Web:**

The *Sound Science* document is available online at [http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/research/shared/sound\\_science/documents/sound\\_science\\_finalweb.pdf](http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/research/shared/sound_science/documents/sound_science_finalweb.pdf)

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

Northwest Fisheries Science Center: <http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov>

Puget Sound Partnership: [www.pugetsoundpartnership.org/](http://www.pugetsoundpartnership.org/)

Puget Sound Action Team: [www.psat.wa.gov](http://www.psat.wa.gov)

State of the Sound 2007 report [www.psat.wa.gov/sos](http://www.psat.wa.gov/sos)

### ***Sound Science Signers***

Usha Varanasi, NOAA

Ron Sims, King County

Mike Grayum, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

Brad Ack, Puget Sound Action Team

David Weekes, The Nature Conservancy

Ron Kreizenbeck, US Environmental Protection Agency

Ann Kinsinger, US Geological Survey

Arthur Nowell, University of Washington

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Jeffrey Koenings, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife

Mary Selecky, WA Department of Health

Doug Southerland, WA Department of Natural Resources