

North American Salmon Stronghold Partnership Strategic Plan – 2009-2012

The North American Salmon Stronghold Partnership is a new initiative, launched in 2008, with formal endorsement of nine Salmon Strongholds. The intent of this Strategic Plan is to provide short-term guidance to support the institutionalization of the Stronghold Partnership, consistent with the long-term vision and Mission of the Partnership. Thus, this Strategic Plan is developed with a three-year span and will be revised in 2012, or sooner, if needed.

Conceptual Overview – Populations of native Pacific Salmon are broadly distributed from Japan around the Pacific Rim to California, and runs of wild salmon have generally been declining in the southern range of North America since the mid 1800s. In Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California, Pacific Salmon are classified into Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESU) with over half of the ESUs listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). However, within these geographic areas, some of the remaining runs of wild salmon are relatively healthy, albeit persisting at a fraction of their historical abundance – these populations are referred to as Salmon Strongholds.

Alaska, accounting for roughly one third of North Pacific wild salmon abundance, is regarded as a regional wild salmon stronghold. These relatively healthy salmon runs and watersheds in Alaska face growing challenges in the face of climate change and development.

The Salmon Stronghold Partnership is a voluntary, public-private initiative that emphasizes the protection of core centers of wild salmon abundance and diversity. For less impacted regions, the Stronghold Partners are committed to protecting and maintaining many of the extraordinarily productive northern wild salmon ecosystems. In the Pacific Northwest, the Stronghold Partnership focuses on proactive actions in the healthiest remaining wild salmon ecosystems, complementing existing efforts to restore damaged watersheds.. Currently, no single entity exists that has the authority or ability accomplish this mission. The common-sense value of protecting the best remaining areas and species is an elementary, incontrovertible principle of conservation biology.

The Stronghold Partnership – The North American Salmon Stronghold Partnership was established to identify and protect a network of the healthiest remaining wild Pacific salmon ecosystems across North America. Whereas text describing the Salmon Stronghold Partnership uses terminology emphasizing salmon, or salmon and steelhead, the intent of the Stronghold Partnership is to protect and restore ecosystem processes that also support native aquatic and terrestrial species (e.g., including bull trout, Pacific Lamprey, native cutthroat redband trout, and so on).

The Stronghold Partnership is a voluntary, private-public effort spanning political and land ownership boundaries, accelerating existing ecosystem protection and restoration efforts by providing leadership, enhanced coordination and public and private resources to support strategically prioritized, science-based, locally supported actions.

Stronghold Partnership Vision – In 2100 and beyond, sufficient healthy wild salmon freshwater and marine habitat exists to support abundant and diverse populations of wild Pacific salmon. The land ownership and management practices in these basins will sustain healthy salmon runs and the economic, cultural and ecological benefits salmon provide.

Stronghold Partnership Mission – The North American Salmon Stronghold Partnership will identify and work to protect a network of the healthiest remaining wild Pacific salmon ecosystems in North America to ensure the long-term survival of native Pacific salmon, associated native, biota, human communities, and ecosystem services that depend on and are supported by these watersheds.

Strategies – 2009 - 2012

- Report results of science-based classification of Salmon Strongholds.
- Support and enhance local and regional efforts in endorsed strongholds to identify, prioritize, and coordinate actions that protect and restore ecosystem function that supports healthy wild salmon populations.
- Develop programmatic and site specific tools and share best practices that add value to local and regional efforts in and across the network of Strongholds.
- Communicate Stronghold mission and principles to participants and audiences critical to achieving NASSP outcomes.
- Secure resources to support the implementation of NASSP strategies.

Outcomes – 2009 – 2012

- A science-based classification process to identify Salmon Strongholds informs federal, state, local and regional policy decisions.
- Prioritized actions, endorsed by NASSP, enhance local and regional efforts to protect strong salmon populations in and across the network of strongholds.
- Tools and practices developed by/through NASSP are effective in protecting and restoring ecosystem function in and across a network of Strongholds.
- Key partners and constituents actively support implementation of the Stronghold mission and principles.
- Resources are in place to sustain implementation of NASSP strategies.

Guiding Principles – The Stronghold Partnership will:

- Rely on a Cooperative Approach
- Focus on Protecting and Restoring Ecosystem Function
- Apply Science and Policy explicitly
- Emphasize the Long Term Reliance on Natural Processes
- Build on Local Leadership, Scientific Expertise, and Delivery Systems
- Improve Efficiency of Delivery Mechanisms
- Establish Metrics for Ecosystem Monitoring
- Support the Health of Local Communities and Economies.
- Increase Resources Available for Conservation and Restoration to Support Local Efforts

Strategy I: Report results of science-based classification of Salmon Strongholds.				
Outcome I: A science-based classification process to identify Salmon Strongholds informs federal, state, local and regional policy decisions.				
Action	Product	Priority	When?	Lead
1.1. Improve expert rating database by engaging state partners to verify and add information to database.	1.1. Technical Memo to Steering Committee characterizing current status of expert rating database and recommendations for engaging state partners to enhance database during 2009.	1	Q1 2009	
1.2. Engage state partners to enhance expert rating database.	1.2. Opportunities for state partners to enhance expert rating database are provided.	1	Q2-Q4 2009	
1.3. Analyze up-dated expert rating database; create new maps displaying single and multiple species stronghold populations.	1.3. Analysis of up-dated expert rating database to identify strong populations; new maps displaying single and multiple species stronghold populations.	1	Q1 2010	
1.4. Provide, for Steering Committee review, results of expert rating database analysis, methodology for classifying populations, identification of strong populations, and maps displaying results.	1.4. Draft report submitted to Steering Committee, describing expert ranking system, database, analysis methodology, classifications and maps of strong salmon populations.	1	Q3 2010	
1.5. Produce final report describing expert rating database, methodologies for ranking populations, and classifications and maps of strong populations.	1.5. Final Salmon Stronghold Report produced, incorporating critique of Steering Committee entities.	1	Q1 2011	
1.6. Publication of peer-reviewed Salmon Stronghold Report manuscript; final report released to partners.	1.6. Salmon Stronghold Report manuscript accepted for publication.	1	Q4 2011	
1.7. Define various levels of Stronghold basin endorsement to signal potential levels of support provided by Steering Committee.	1.7. A range of significance of Stronghold endorsement is described and incorporated into Governance Operational Guidelines.	1	Q3 2009	
1.8. Develop a format to document science and policy rationale associated with consideration of any basin for endorsement as a Stronghold.	1.8. Format to display science and policy rationale associated with consideration of any basin for endorsement as a Stronghold incorporated into Governance Operational Guidelines.	1	Q3 2009	
1.9. Document science and policy rationale associated with all endorsed Strongholds.	1.9. Science and policy rationale associated with all endorsed Strongholds is documented in approved format.	1	Q4 2009	
1.10. Conduct communications and outreach on stronghold identification and network strategy to key opinion leaders and the public to increase public/scientific acceptance.	1.10. Public and scientific recognition and acceptance of stronghold prioritization increase. Stronghold population analyses are used to inform policy and management decisions at local , state, regional, and national scales. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i>	1	Ongoing	

Strategy 2: Support and enhance local and regional efforts in endorsed strongholds to identify, prioritize, and coordinate actions that protect and restore ecosystem function that supports healthy wild salmon populations.				
Outcome 2: Prioritized actions, endorsed by NASSP, enhance local and regional efforts to protect strong salmon populations in and across the network of strongholds.				
Action	Product	Priority	When?	Lead
2.1. Develop guidelines for conducting a Stronghold basin needs & prioritization assessment building on current efforts.	2.1. Guidelines for conducting a Stronghold basin needs assessments adopted.	1	Q3 2009	
2.2. Select one Stronghold to test the needs assessment guidelines.	2.2. Initiate test of assessment guidelines in selected Stronghold basin(s).	1	Q3 2009	
2.3. Engage local communities to identify and implement community endorsed, incentive based solutions to maintaining wild salmon, healthy ecosystems, and the services they provide. Solicit feedback from local stakeholders; adapt actions, policies, and priorities.	2.3. Initiate one or more pilot projects in selected Stronghold basin(s).	1	Q3 2009	
2.4. Consider additional opportunities to implement NASSP strategies on an interim basis in endorsed, non-pilot Strongholds per approval of the Steering Committee.	2.4. Annual reporting of NASSP support from local stakeholder groups in Stronghold basins. Ongoing activity.	1	Q4 Annually	
2.5. Develop strategy to direct public and private resources toward activities in Stronghold Basins as requested by local stakeholders.	2.5. The amount and efficiency of existing public and private resources directed toward on the ground efforts in Stronghold Basins is increased.	2		
2.6. Develop a framework for implementing prioritized actions based on needs assessment.	2.6. Framework adopted reflecting lifecycle limiting factors.	3		
Tasks that support actions				
1. Ensure that other efforts to identify priority watersheds (e.g., USFS Key Watersheds, TNC priority areas, Western Rivers priority list, and so on) are considered as part of the Stronghold endorsement process.	a. Inclusion of guidelines to consider key assessment processes and prioritizations incorporated into Governance document.		Q3 2009	
2. Develop written guidelines regarding standards for screening requests for Stronghold Basin endorsement by SC.	a. Inclusion of guidelines for screening basin endorsement requests incorporated into Governance document.		Q3 2009	
3. Develop guidelines for consideration of strongholds that may be endorsed in 2009.	a. Guidelines established and approved.		Q3 2009	
4. Document explicit science end policy basis for Steering Committee endorsement of Stronghold Basins.	a. Incorporation of documentation requirement in Governance document.		Q3 2009	
5. Develop new incentives in one or more selected stronghold basins as part of implementing pilot projects.	a. Annual reporting of new incentives delivered to Stronghold basins by NASSP.		Q4 Annually	

Strategy 3: Develop programmatic and site specific tools and share best practices that add value to local and regional efforts in and across the network of Strongholds.				
Outcome 3: Tools and practices developed by/through NASSP are effective in protecting and restoring ecosystem function in and across a network of Strongholds.				
Action	Product	Priority	When?	Lead
3.1. Develop a test approach to identify programmatic needs across Stronghold basins (e.g. water quality and quantity, riparian function, maintaining ecosystem services, etc.).	3.1. Test approach to identify programmatic needs across stronghold basins.	1	Q1 2010	
3.2. Engage local/regional partners with related responsibilities and expertise to propose programmatic tools to address programmatic needs and add value across Strongholds.	3.2. Initiate implementation of tools and practices applied through NASSP to protect and restore ecosystem functions and address key lifecycle limiting factors in two or more endorsed Stronghold basins.	1	Q4 2010	
3.3. Engage appropriate scientific processes, predictive models, and stakeholder advice to predict future life cycle threats (e.g. climate change, human population growth, development, water use, fish management, etc.) and opportunities to achieve NASSP strategies.	3.3. A collaborative report that synthesizes predicted future threats and opportunities to protect critical salmon ecosystems is drafted and submitted for peer review.	3	Q3 2012	
3.4. Propose a monitoring, analysis, and reporting system, coordinated with existing and related systems in the Pacific Northwest region to evaluate status and trends of wild salmon across the Pacific Rim in a manner that can be used to make comparisons over time in ecoregions, by species, and so on, related to conservation investments in Regional Strongholds and Stronghold Focal Areas.	3.4. A collaborative report is drafted and submitted for peer review including: 1) strengths and shortcomings of current salmon and watershed monitoring within the region of the Stronghold Partnership, 2) sensitivity of comparisons possible with available metrics, 3) time-frames over which certain levels of change are detectable, 4) suitability of these efforts to serve as a basis for evaluating status and trends of the Stronghold Partnership, 5) existing commitments regarding data management/analyses, and 6) monitoring, reporting and analyses required to evaluate status and trends of salmon and habitat over time (region and in stronghold).	3	Q3 2012	

Strategy 4: Communicate Stronghold mission and principles to participants and audiences critical to achieving NASSP outcomes.				
Outcome 4: Key partners and constituents actively support implementation of the Stronghold mission and principles.				
Action	Product	Priority	When?	Lead
4.1. Develop outreach plan to actively recruit new partners.	4.1. Short term (one year) and long term (2010-2012) strategies to recruit and engage new partners adopted.	1	Q2 2009	
4.2. Develop NASSP internal communications plan.	4.2. Plan approved that describes messaging and strategies used to communicate with internal audiences.	1	Q2 2009	
4.3. Develop NASSP external communications plan.	4.3. Plan approved that describes messaging and strategies used to communicate with external audiences.	1	Q2 2009	
4.4. Promote awareness of NASSP actions and strategies that add value to local and regional efforts.	4.4. Positive articles and materials are published on the Partnership and Stronghold strategy. (ongoing)	1	Ongoing	
4.5. Provide access to expert opinion database, Stronghold maps, and general Partnership information to partners and general public.	4.5. Website completed that provides public access to expert opinion database, Stronghold maps, and general Partnership information (learning network).		Q4 2009	
4.5. Evaluate response of key stakeholders and partners to Stronghold mission and strategies.	4.5. Use feedback to improve NASSP communications.	3		
Tasks that support actions				
1. Assess and report results of Partnership investments and activities.	a. Annual report published that details results of partnership investments and activities. Each SC entity will provide a description of in-kind and other resources in support of the Stronghold Partnership and specific strongholds. (Annually)		Q4 Annually	
2. Determine appropriate scope and protocol for NASSP communications (i.e. letters of support)	a. Governance document revised to include scope and protocol for NASSP external communications.		Q4 2009	
3. Work with tribes to increase participation.	a. Tribes are represented on NASSP Steering Committee.		Q4 2009	

Strategy 5: Secure resources to support the implementation of NASSP strategies.				
Outcome 5: Resources are in place to sustain implementation of NASSP strategies.				
Action	Product	Priority	When?	Lead
5.1. Identify one year funding strategy and resources to support core NASSP functions and implement Partnership strategies.	5.1. One year funding strategy adopted to provide core administrative support and project funds.	1	Q1 2009	
5.2. Develop one year action work plan.	5.2. Implementation agreements by Steering Committee entities to act as lead on 2009 Strategic Plan deliverables.	1	Q2 2009	
5.3. Develop funding strategy 2010-2012.	5.3. Funding strategy adopted through 2010-2012. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i>	2	Q1 2010	
5.4. Develop three year action work plan identifying proposed budget and contributions by Steering Committee entities for deliverables.	5.4. Implementation agreements signed by Steering Committee entities to act as lead on 2010-12 Strategic Plan deliverables. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i>	2	Q1 2010	
Tasks that support actions				
1. Propose and establish grants process for distribution of funds and resources, as available, for activities approved by the Steering Committee.	a. Grants process identified in federal legislation and approved by Steering Committee.		Q2 2009	
2. Steering Committee entities provided financial support for core NASSP functions.	a. All Steering Committee entities provide summary of financial and in-kind resources provided in support of NASSP. As feasible, denote contributions to core NAASSP functions separately from contributions that are directly allocated to endorsed Stronghold Basins. Summary included in annual report.		Q4 Annually	
3. Update Governance Operational Guidelines annually to clarify administrative processes budget, expenditures and similar issues.	a. Governance Operational guidelines revised in second and fourth quarters as needed, and included in annual report.		Q4 Annually	
4. Submit joint proposals to fund Partnership activities and core administrative costs.	a. Number of joint proposals tracked and indicated in annual report.		Q4 Annually	
5. Submit joint proposals to leverage private funding to support NASSP initiatives in endorsed Stronghold basins.	a. Number of joint proposals tracked and indicated in annual report.		Q4 Annually	

North American Salmon Stronghold Partnership Strategic Plan – Global Product Schedule

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Q-1	<p>1.1. Technical Memo to Steering Committee characterizing current status of expert rating database and recommendations for engaging state partners to enhance database during 2009.</p> <p>5.1. One year funding strategy adopted to provide core administrative support and project funds.</p>	<p>1.3. Conduct analysis of up-dated expert rating database; create new maps displaying single and multiple species stronghold populations.</p> <p>3.1. Test approach to identify programmatic needs across stronghold basins.</p> <p>5.3. Funding strategy adopted through 2010-2012. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>5.4. Implementation agreements signed by Steering Committee entities signed to act as lead on 2010-12 Strategic Plan deliverables. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p>	<p>1.5. Final Salmon Stronghold Report produced, incorporating critique of Steering Committee entities. 5.3. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>5.4. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p>	<p>5.3. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>5.4. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p>
Q-2	<p>1.2. Opportunities for state partners to enhance expert rating database are provided. <i>Ongoing activity during 2009.</i></p>			
Q-3	<p>1.7. A range of significance of Stronghold endorsement is described and incorporated into Governance Operational Guidelines.</p> <p>1.8. Format to display science and policy rationale associated with consideration of any basin for endorsement as a Stronghold incorporated into Governance Operational Guidelines.</p> <p>2.1. Guidelines for conducting a Stronghold basin needs assessments adopted.</p> <p>2.2. Initiate test of assessment guidelines in selected Stronghold basin(s).</p> <p>2.3. Initiate one or more pilot projects in selected Stronghold basin(s).</p>	<p>1.4. Draft report submitted to Steering Committee, describing expert ranking system, database, analysis methodology, classifications and maps of strong salmon populations.</p> <p>5.4. Implementation agreements by Steering Committee entities signed to act as lead on 2010-12 Strategic Plan deliverables.</p>		<p>3.3. A collaborative report that synthesizes predicted future threats and opportunities to protect critical salmon ecosystems is drafted and submitted for peer review.</p> <p>3.4. A collaborative report is drafted and submitted for peer review including: 1) strengths and shortcomings of current salmon and watershed monitoring within the region of the Stronghold Partnership, 2) sensitivity of comparisons possible with available metrics, 3) time-frames over which certain levels of change are detectable, 4) suitability of these efforts to serve as a basis for evaluating status and trends of the Stronghold Partnership, 5) existing commitments regarding data management/analyses, and 6) monitoring, reporting and analyses required to evaluate status and trends of salmon and habitat over time (region and in stronghold).</p>
Q-4	<p>1.9. Science and policy rationale associated with all endorsed Strongholds is documented in approved format.</p> <p>1.10. Public and scientific recognition and acceptance of stronghold prioritization increase. Stronghold population analyses are used to inform policy and management decisions at local, state, regional, and national scales. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>2.4. Annual reporting of NASSP support from local stakeholder groups in Stronghold basins. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>4.4. Positive articles and materials are published on the Partnership and Stronghold strategy. (ongoing)</p> <p>4.5. Website completed that provides public access to expert opinion database, Stronghold maps, and general Partnership information (learning network).</p>	<p>1.10. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>2.4. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>3.2. Initiate implementation of tools and practices applied through NASSP to protect and restore ecosystem functions and address key lifecycle limiting factors in two or more endorsed Stronghold basins.</p> <p>4.4. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>5.3. Funding strategy adopted through 2010-2012.</p>	<p>1.6. Salmon Stronghold Report manuscript accepted for publication.</p> <p>1.10. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>2.4. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>4.4. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p>	<p>1.10. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>2.4. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p> <p>4.4. <i>Ongoing annual activity.</i></p>