

Strategic Plan

2016-2020





Photo Credit: Leah Kintner


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The Board of Trustees of the Skagit Climate Science Consortium is pleased to present our 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. The plan provides all those involved with our organization a vision and focus for how to create a more resilient and desirable future. Climate change represents a grand challenge from the individual human level to the societal scale. The scientists and partners at the Skagit Climate Science Consortium know that quality science, made relevant and timely through trusted partnerships and relationships is key to facing this challenge successfully. With many local examples of how climate impacts can be successfully adapted to SC² presents this guiding document of our vision and focus for the next five years.

THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US



The world of the future will likely not be the world of the past. As air temperatures rise globally and locally over time systems will change in ways that affect people, landscapes and ecosystems. Understanding and considering future changes can help people best determine if, how and in what timeframe they want to adapt.

Science and information, made available by people and organizations like the Skagit Climate Science Consortium is critical to creating a more resilient and desirable future.

**Climate Change
Drivers**

**System Changes
and Impacts**

**Human and
Local Challenges**



THEORY OF CHANGE



Our Vision

Reduce vulnerability of human communities and ecosystems in the Skagit River basin to the impacts of a changing climate

A Pathway to Resiliency

SC²'s theory of change is that quality, credible, integrated locally-based, decision-maker ready climate science information—partnered with those focused on action or motivated to act—will increase both the level of action, but also the quality of actions, resulting in a more resilient community.



A Community Primed for Action

SC² believes that given the high level of mistrust and partisan perspectives surrounding the topic of climate change it is imperative that SC² remain focused on providing credible, locally-focused scientific information in support of and in response to those motivated to act. Indeed, 2015 polling of Skagit County residents by SC² and the Yale Project on Climate Communications shows:

79% of residents think global warming is happening

66% believe Skagit County will be harmed by global warming

31% think Skagit County is already being harmed

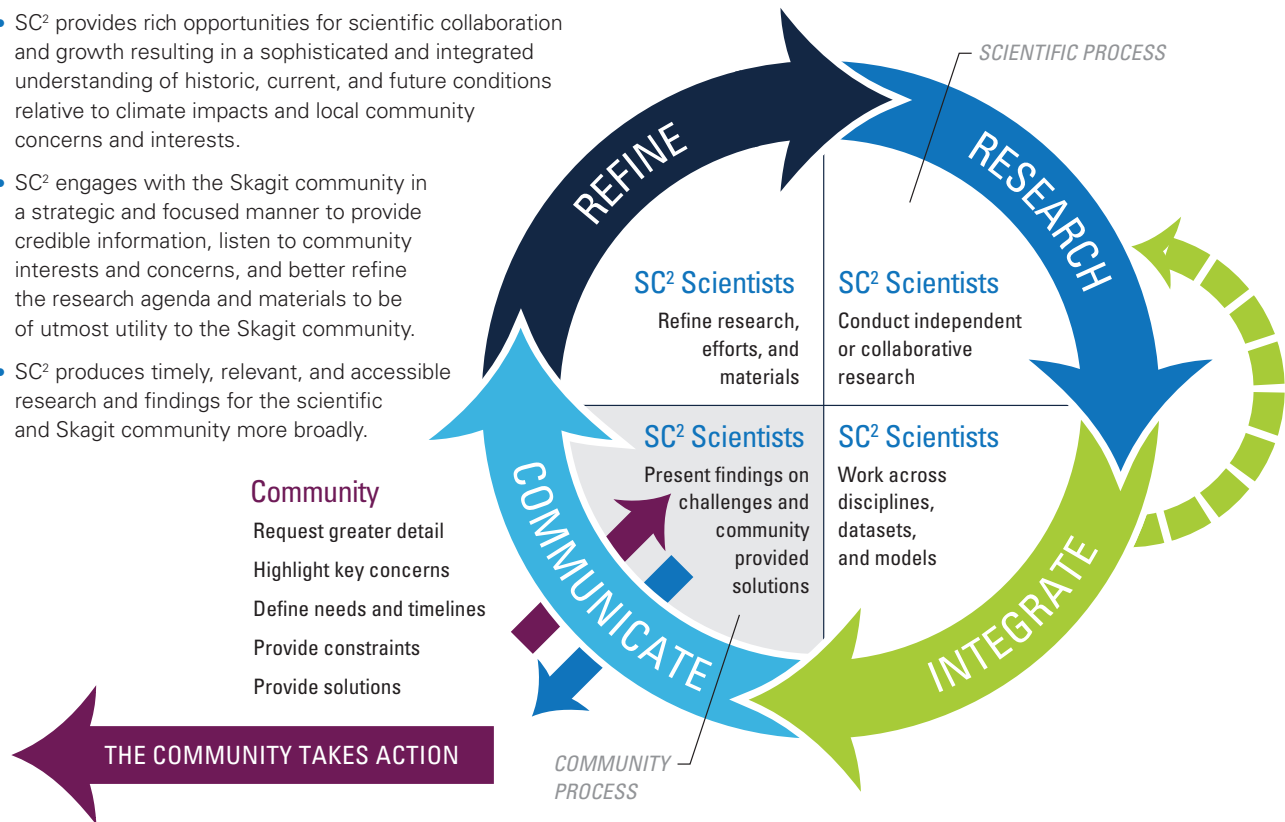
75% of residents think local government, businesses, and individuals should take action now



Statistics above are from the Yale Project on Climate Communications, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

A Scientific and Community Collaboration

- SC² provides rich opportunities for scientific collaboration and growth resulting in a sophisticated and integrated understanding of historic, current, and future conditions relative to climate impacts and local community concerns and interests.
- SC² engages with the Skagit community in a strategic and focused manner to provide credible information, listen to community interests and concerns, and better refine the research agenda and materials to be of utmost utility to the Skagit community.
- SC² produces timely, relevant, and accessible research and findings for the scientific and Skagit community more broadly.



Together, We Create a More Resilient Community

When the city of Anacortes needed to replace its water treatment plant, SC² provided information about projected climate impacts that could potentially affect its new plant.

SC² scientists worked directly with the City and plant managers for over three years to provide unbiased scientific information they could use to make smarter investments and weigh the risks of action and inaction. The scientists designed analyses pertinent to the plant's location and water treatment operations to answer specific questions about sea level rise, projected amounts of sediment in the watershed, and future flooding.

The City built a climate-smart plant that balances risk with available infrastructure investment. The City implemented a new technological solution for treating the sediment-laden water, which resulted in significantly higher flood protection. SC² performed preliminary modeling of salinity risks to the water intake pipe and found that it is not an immediate concern based on currently modeled rates of sea level rise and the lifespan of the plant.



2016-2020 STRATEGIC FOCUS & VISION



MISSION

To support Skagit communities as they adapt to climate change, SC²:

- Fosters collaborative scientific research to understand the diverse and interrelated impacts of climate change from the Skagit's headwaters to Puget Sound; and
- Produces relevant climate-related products closely integrated with the Skagit community's needs and concerns.
- Serve as a conduit between Skagit communities and SC² scientists to assist in the development of adaptation strategies

VISION

Reduce vulnerability of human communities and ecosystems in the Skagit River basin to the impacts of a changing climate.



POWERFUL SCIENTIFIC LEARNING COMMUNITY

We will provide rich opportunities for scientific collaboration and growth resulting in a sophisticated and integrated understanding of historic, current and future conditions relative to climate impacts and local community concerns and interests.

ENGAGED SKAGIT ADAPTATION COMMUNITY

We will engage with the Skagit community in a strategic and focused manner to provide credible information, listen to community interests and concerns, and to better refine the research agenda and materials to be of utmost utility to the Skagit community.

USABLE SCIENCE

We will produce timely, relevant and accessible research and findings for both the scientific and Skagit community.

GOVERNANCE

We will continue to build and sustain a “right-sized” organization committed to achieving the SC² vision and mission, while expanding governance to include a role for civic leaders.

FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT

We will develop the relationships and structures necessary to secure funding levels necessary to sustain the organization and key research initiatives.

STRATEGIC GOALS



1. POWERFUL SCIENTIFIC LEARNING COMMUNITY

We will provide rich opportunities for scientific collaboration and growth resulting in a sophisticated and integrated understanding of historic, current and future conditions relative to climate impacts and local community concerns and interests.



Goal 1:

Create and sustain a powerful learning community with SC² scientists and collaborators.

Goal 2:

Design, conduct and continue to integrate a Skagit-based climate science research agenda and work plan. 5-year priorities include:

- Peak and low flows
- Fate of the delta
- Sediment source, transport, and deposition
- Water temperature monitoring and modeling
- Climate related trends (historic and future)
- Salmonid and ecosystem impacts and responses
- Sea level rise and waves

Goal 3:

Learn the specifics of community needs for information and shape the SC² research agenda to address knowledge gaps.

Goal 4:

Publish findings in peer-reviewed journals and present findings at scientific and climate adaptation conferences.

2. ENGAGED SKAGIT ADAPTATION COMMUNITY

We will engage with the Skagit community in a strategic and focused manner to provide credible information, listen to community interests and concerns, and to better refine the research agenda and materials to be of utmost utility to the Skagit community.



Goal 1:

Strategically host and participate in community discussions and dialogues cognizant of key climate threats and non-traditional venues that broaden engagement.

Goal 2:

Respond to key stakeholder interests (small city, agriculture, salmon protection and restoration, power, utilities) with improved scientific information.

Goal 3:

Seek media coverage in order to more broadly convey key information and findings.



3. USABLE SCIENCE

We will produce timely, relevant and accessible research and findings for both the scientific and Skagit community.



Goal 1:

Document and consolidate known scientific information in order to convey science in a variety of formats (video, print, web, radio, visual).

Goal 2:

Build and maintain a website clearinghouse of information and resources.

Goal 3:

Create usable and presentation ready materials for scientists and others.

Goal 4:

Understand the audience.

4. GOVERNANCE

We will continue to build and sustain a “right-sized” organization committed to achieving the SC² vision and mission, while expanding governance to include a role for civic leaders.



Goal 1:

Secure staffing necessary to sustain a “right-sized” organization.

Goal 2:

Strengthen Board management of the new nonprofit.

Goal 3:

Develop and implement high quality and “right sized” accounting, contracting and management practices.

Goal 4:

Cultivate a Leader’s Circle to broaden community engagement.

5. FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT

We will develop the relationships and structures necessary to secure funding levels necessary to sustain the organization and key research initiatives.



Goal 1:

Document and consolidate known gaps and priority funding needs, ultimately developing a longer-term fundraising strategy.

Goal 2:

Build understanding of funding world including private, government and high-net worth individuals.

Goal 3:

Cultivate and sustain relationships with private and public funders.

Goal 4:

Secure funding.

Goal 5:

Develop funder-appropriate materials.

SC² PILLARS

THE FOLLOWING PILLARS ARE THE VALUES THAT GUIDE HOW WE CONDUCT OUR WORK. THESE PILLARS ARE THE MORAL COMPASS FOR ENSURING THAT SC² IS MEETING THE VISION AND GOALS IN THE MANNER ENVISIONED BY ITS FOUNDERS AND CURRENT PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS.



Photo Credit: Eric Frommer

SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

SC² believes that producing high-quality, trusted, well-integrated and useful climate science at the local scale is the best means to move beyond the partisan climate change impasse and foster meaningful discourse and action. Scientific excellence means producing peer-reviewed, locally important and on-the-ground validated information. SC² values continued learning, listening and improvement as a fundamental basis for scientific excellence.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

SC² values creating a simple and powerful organization that nourishes, sustains and leverages its human and capital resources.



RESPONSIVE, RESPECTFUL & RELEVANT

SC² believes that by being responsive, respectful and relevant, SC² can act in ways that ultimately help the Skagit Community reduce their vulnerability and build resiliency. SC² values and indeed depends upon the input of scientists and community members in order to be responsive to issues of human or ecological importance. SC² respects conflicted and competing interests and values by providing neutral and responsive scientific information to anyone who requests it.

LEADERSHIP IN CLIMATE SCIENCE & ADAPTATION

SC² models the way in which a scientific organization can respond to and support a diverse community. SC² seeks to provide credible scientific information to any community or individual seeking information. SC² respects there are varying opinions both about climate science and how to respond to a changing climate. SC² values an open discourse about the future and the potential implications and risks of both action and inaction. SC² shares these practices with other scientists and adaptation practitioners in the belief that scientists and the public can and should collaborate more effectively to improve the resiliency of our communities in the face of daunting future pressures and changes. SC² is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to the Skagit community as a whole.



www.skagitclimatescience.org

Visit our website to learn more about who we are, what we do, and the various resources we can provide.

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